BY INDRA'S AID

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A GLIMPSE OF LIFE IN THE VEDIC AGE

BY

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THE BANGALORE PRINTING & PUBLISHING CO., LTD.
BANGALORE CITY
1933

DEDICATED

TO

MY WIFE

FOREWORD

I perused your work entitled "By Indra's Aid" with interest and profit. It presents a vivid and strikingly accurate picture of the life and social condition of the Vedic Āryans.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Arthasāstravishārada

DR. R. SHĀMA SĀSTRY, B.A., PH.D., M.R.A.S.

MYSORE,
22nd January 1933.

PREFACE

In this little book I have attempted to give, as the sub-title suggests, no more than a glimpse of the tribal life of the Āryans in the Vedic Age. My story deals with a time when the Yamunā formed the eastern limit of the Āryan advance, an epoch in history definitely prior to that of most, if not all, of the Brāhmaṇas and to that of the epics. "The country was then not being overrun by migratory tribes but was 'regularly settled', and enjoying on the whole peace and prosperity. The hymns frequently refer to conflicts between the gods and the demons, also designated Dāsas and Dasyus, but much less frequently between men and men. Of these rare conflicts between men and men, again, perhaps as many are waged by the Āryas against the Dāsas, as are waged by the Āryas against other Āryas allied to the Dāsas...... The descendants, both of the immigrants and the natives, were reconciled and assimilated as inhabitants of a common motherland, and the wars and feuds known to the poets of the Ṛgveda were wars and feuds that are inevitable among the different states and classes of the population of a regularly settled country that is free from the fear of foreign invasion." (Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda, *Survival of the Prehistoric Civilization of the Indus*

Valley, pp. 2, 8. On this matter see also the *Vedic Index*, I, 65.). I do not venture to assign any date to this epoch. That is too thorny a problem.

My indebtedness to the researches of others is indicated by the appended list of works consulted. So much has now been done by the Oriental scholars of many lands in translation, commentary and special treatise, that it is quite possible for one like myself, ignorant of Sanskrit, to feel, in gleaning material for a short and simple story, sufficiently safeguarded in respect of the accuracy of his details, such as, for example, the position of women.

My endeavour has been to depict the Āryans as men having like passions as ourselves. I have attempted to sketch what I may term the "probable actualities" of their daily lives. The fantastic and the marvellous I have eschewed. I have described the *soma* sacrifice in considerable detail in order to bring home to the reader what an important place this sacrifice in its several forms occupied in all the ritual of the Āryan religion and how early it was elaborated. Being essentially a sacrifice in honour of Indra, it is in full keeping with the theme of my story, but for school reading it may be omitted, if so desired. My description will also bring home to the reader how arduous was the work of the priests to whose labours we owe the Ṛgveda and the remarkable continuity of the Āryan tradition. Within the compass of a story book designed primarily for schoolboys I have tried to give as satisfactory a picture as is possible of this wonderful people.

For the spelling, I have followed the *Vedic Index* to maintain a uniform standard.

The ground-plan of the sacrificial area here reproduced is that drawn by Haug in his edition of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. I have inserted it for its wealth of interesting detail. I have had it checked by competent Brahman priests of to-day who are well versed in sacrificial rites and am assured that it is as nearly correct as any pen and ink drawing can be. But my description in the text is based on other authority, the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, *vide* *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra*, VI, 1, 34; VII, 1, 10–18, 20–24; VIII, 3, 8–11, 21–36; VIII, 4, 1–28; VIII, 5, 1–29, 30–41; VIII, 6, 1–12, 36–38; VIII, 7, 1–24; XVI, 7, 28–29, 31–32; XVI, 8, 1–20, 22–23, 28; XVII, 3, 14–16; XVIII, 6, 8–14; XX, 4, 16. These passages describe the procedure as well as the lay-out and the dimensions. If a ground-plan be drawn from my description, it will be found perhaps simpler and more symmetrical than that of Haug but not essentially different.

F. R. S.

BANGALORE,
18th June 1933.

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CONTENTS

On him must all men call amid the battle ;
He, high adored, alone has power to succour.

Ṛgveda, IV. 24. 2.

BY INDRA'S AID

CHAPTER I

An Early Aryan Homestead

THE long hot day was drawing to a close. In every homestead of the little Āryan settlement on the bank of the Sarasvatī, the evening oblations to Agni, illuminator of the darkness, were about to be offered with simple prayer and worship. The villagers must have been glad that night was approaching, for the nights, though hot, were nevertheless cooler than the days. The hot season with its drought had been unduly prolonged. They yearned for rain and more than once had cast a spell for it. To induce the waters of the skies to flow down to the earth they had held aloft, stretched out on poles, animal skins into which arrows were shot. When this proved to be ineffective, dressed in black garments they had offered black victims to Parjanya the Rain God and, dipping herbs in water, had shaken the drops on to the ground. Finally, after a few days, they had tried a more magical spell. The headman of the village vigorously waved aloft and around a long pole to which were tied the heads of a ram and a dog together with long loose hair. By this means they had confidently hoped to drive away the demons and aid in breaking open the sky. Because, however, in spite of all their efforts, the rain showed

no signs of coming, the villagers had not begun to leave their homes on the river bank for the huts in the pur on the higher ground behind their settlement. Some, indeed, amongst them considered it really unnecessary to move away because never yet had their well-chosen site been reached by the flood.

Amongst those who disliked this autumnal moving to the cramped quarters in the pur was the owner of a house on the outer edge of the village. He was now seated at work with his wife and son outside the house door. He grumbled as he worked, "here for many years have I offered oblation and prayer to Vāstoṣpati and he has preserved our dwelling; the floods have not come nigh. Why then should we, like sheep, follow our neighbours?"

"My father, it is true that, like a herdsman, you have driven prayers and praises to our House God but who can say for a surety that Indra may not be displeased by your belittling his power and so come mightily to overwhelm us? Better it were to do as we have always done and follow the custom of our neighbours."

"Ojas speaks wisely," said his mother without raising her eyes from the weaving of a new cloak for her husband. "We should not break the custom; our neighbours will think evil of us and mock us."

Silence fell upon the little group. The old man said no more but applied himself to the work upon which he and his son were engaged. A roughly-dressed hide lay between them which they were cutting into strips to serve as thongs for the farm waggons to

replace those worn out and shrivelled by the heat. Fond glances were cast upon the pair by the wife and mother who had every reason to be proud of her menfolk. Her husband, in spite of his grey beard, was still vigorous and upright. In the gatherings at the village *sabhā* he excelled in speech and song and did not need, as many of his fellows needed, copious draughts of *surā* to unlock his lips and stimulate his wits. In spite of many jeering challenges, he refused to play with the dice, remembering how his father had gambled away his property leaving the family impoverished. Ojas, his elder son, already remarkable for his strength, though he had not yet seen eighteen autumns, followed faithfully in his father's footsteps. His clear blue eyes looked fearlessly from his handsome, healthy and still beardless face and his muscles rippled with every movement of his fair-skinned body. He wore his hair straight, well combed and oiled and did not coil it up upon the top of his head as his father did.

From the interior of their humble wooden house, where she had been preparing the evening meal, came a beautiful young girl at sight of whom Ojas smiled and said, "Little sister, the rushes for your mats I have left in the shed to soak; go, bring them out and join us; we have missed your presence, Flower of the Forest." With a look of affection upon her handsome and dearly-loved brother, Ghoṣā, for so was she named, shaking back over her shoulders the long plaits of her fine hair, turned to do his bidding. Soon returning with her arms full of wet rushes, she sat down by her mother and set to work with deft and nimble fingers.

Theirs was a happy family. Hard work and frugal living were helping them to regain something of their former prosperity. Although the number of their oxen, cows, goats and sheep was still small, yet it was steadily increasing by the divine favour of Pūṣan who had protected them from disease and the ravages of wild beasts of prey. And now the parents were looking about for a suitable bridegroom for their beautiful daughter. Many young men were attracted by her but none so far had been thought eligible to wed into a family that boasted a more direct connection, albeit distant, than any of theirs, with the Tṛtsus, the royal family of their tribe the Bharatas.

Along the tracks outside the fence of stakes and thorn bush that enclosed a considerable area around their house the dust was beginning to arise, stirred by the feet of the cattle coming leisurely home to their byres. Every now and then came the barking of the herdsmen's dogs as they urged on the stragglers away from the patches of withered grass they stopped to nibble.

"Āyu will soon be home now," said the old man. "I am glad for I am hungry and want my supper. Poor lad, he will be tired. I wish the rains would come and save him from these long journeys looking for pasture. Our cattle are getting too thin and bony. Never have I known such a drought. The river that lies between us and those cattle-thieving rascals, the Dasyus, is getting very low. I fear the villains will steal through our scattered settlements on the other side, ford the stream and be up to their mischief again."

"Cheer up, my father," exclaimed Ojas, "the rains cannot be far away; the strength of the soma sacrifices will induce the Maghavan, the red boar of heaven with hair wound like a shell, to send them. And the Dasyus are not likely to repeat last summer's adventure after the sound drubbing we gave them."

"The black-faced noseless ones have good cause to remember your share in their drubbing, brother," said his sister admiringly.

"Nay, Little Flower, I did no more than others of our *grāma*," Ojas modestly replied.

"That is not the tale I heard."

"Probably not, in good sooth," said the mother, "our Ojas is no boaster."

This peaceful conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of Āyu, Ojas' younger brother, and, like him, a straight-limbed sturdy youth.

"Ohë, my father, I have news for thee," began Āyu abruptly, "we heard lions roaring near the pasture grounds! Myself, the other herdsmen of our village and our slaves jumped up quickly. Some of us started to drive the cattle homewards, others lighted fires behind us. 'Twas a great pity for we had found fair grazing and the cattle might have had a good fill."

"Lions!" exclaimed the old man, "last year the Dasyus, this year, lions—our troubles never cease! Doubtless the drought in their desert haunts is driving them thus far afield."

"Well, my father, we'll go out and drive them back again," said Ojas briskly, "no harm has yet

been done, thanks to our skilful herdsmen. A lion or two will be no match for our hunting band. I'll call them together this very night and we shall set out after the monsters without delay."

"But first have your meal, my son," exclaimed his mother. "No one fights or hunts well on an empty stomach."

His father too bade him eat before setting forth on what might prove to be a long and arduous hunt. To Ojas his father's word was law. So he arose from the ground to help Āyu and their two slaves drive the beasts, that were now turning in through the gate, into their respective pens within the enclosure. Two shaggy hounds, one white and the other brown, also assisted them. The task accomplished, they fawned upon Ojas who pulled their ears affectionately and spoke to them: "We go hunting to-night, my trusty hounds, but you must stay at home and guard the house. If it were boars we were chasing you should come but of the ways of the king of the forest you know naught. Your hearts are stout but the foe is too formidable. You will do better service at home."

When they had all assembled in the house, Ojas' father offered an oblation of milk mixed with a brew of grain to Agni. Then followed the evening meal. Ojas sat down with his father and his brother. Rich cakes of grain flour baked with milk and butter and much plain barley bread were set before them on wooden platters by the mother from out of a well-woven basket. Then milk, fresh drawn from the cow, was

brought in by Ghoṣā who poured it from the earthen pitcher into wooden bowls. From a flat basket placed between them each helped himself to handfuls of parched grain.

With hunger satisfied, Ojas and Āyu rose up and went forth to gather together their band of hunters whilst mother and daughter sat down to their meal.

CHAPTER II

The Hunter Hunted

OJAS and Āyu soon returned with the six companions who formed their hunting band. They were eager to set out; never before had they had the chance of hunting the lion.

Ojas' father courteously returned their greetings and sat down with them in the moonlight outside the house to help in the discussion of the best method of attacking the monarch of wild beasts. Two of them, already famous for their skill in capturing wild buffaloes with the lariat or slip noose, suggested that this might be tried also on the lion who was no stronger or heavier than a buffalo. The old man shook his head at this suggestion saying: "I have heard it said that the lion, being himself a hunter, is not easily frightened into running away. You will not get the chance of a clear throw, and, supposing you do get the thong over his head, he will bite through it with his teeth. Moreover, the buffalo has horns over which you may readily cast your noose but the lion has none. Nevertheless take the nooses with you, seeing that you are expert in using them; you may find occasion for them when the lion is wounded."

"Let us try nets," said Āyu, "such as the fowlers use, though of course much stronger. When the beast is entangled, we shall shoot arrows into him."

"There's no time to prepare such nets," replied one of the six companions.

"True," remarked Ojas, "and what if there be many lions?"

"Then," replied his father, "you must gather together an army of hunters from the villages on your road and drive the beasts with flaming brands and great noise into the pits or outstretched nets, of which there may be a store in the villages further down the river."

"But," objected Ojas, "by the time we have made ready these pits in the hard ground or have collected the nets, the rains will break when it is not possible to do any hunting. We do not wish to return empty-handed."

"Yes," remarked another of the six companions, "whatever we do, we must do quickly. I propose that we take the dogs and drive the lions past an ambush from which we can launch either spear or arrow."

"No," replied Ojas, "our dogs are trained to hunt the wild boar but will shrink from a foe whose ways are not those of a boar. Boars are all around us and do constant damage to our crops; lions come but rarely. The dogs are more useful at home. I advise that we set out with spears and bows and, as my father suggests, gather together a host of hunters from the villages we may pass. Perhaps we shall find some skilled in lion-hunting."

"Agreed, agreed," they all exclaimed jumping to their feet. "Now let us make a start."

"Stay but a moment," exclaimed Ojas' mother appearing at the doorway, "you have forgotten the amulets. These will protect you against roving bands

of robbers. They will cover up the eyes of malicious highway thieves." So saying, she came forward and bound on the right arm of each youth the dried cast-off skin of a snake with the customary formula.

Meanwhile Ghoṣā went round amongst them with baskets of cakes and of parched grain. These provisions were stowed away in wallets of leather or tied up in strips of woven sheep's wool and slung across their shoulders next to the well-filled quivers of arrows, the tips of which, made of horn or bronze, had been smeared with poison. Their bows they carried slung on their left shoulders, having loosened the strings in order to fasten the shafts to their left arms. Each had already bound around his left forearm the usual straps of leather to protect him from the twanging strokes of the bowstring which, on their big bows when drawn back to the right ear, rebounded with great force. In the right hand each carried a spear with a stout head of copper. Their heads were bare.

When Ojas' parents had solemnly blessed them calling upon Indra to protect them in danger and upon Pūṣan to go before them and make their path thornless, the little band pressed eagerly forward through the gate of the enclosure and, swinging along at a good pace, were soon lost to sight.

They decided not to stop at the next village because Ojas suspected the young fellows of that place of stealing the antelopes from the pitfalls he and his friends had prepared on their last hunting expedition. So they pressed on, following the course of the river, until they came to the second settlement.

Their approach aroused the watchdogs and they began to bark so furiously that men came running out with hastily snatched-up weapons. However, on hearing the long drawn-out cry "Ārya" shouted by Ojas and his comrades, they welcomed these disturbers of their night's rest. And, when they heard the reason of the visit, they readily agreed to help. In fact, they said, they were themselves about to start out after the lions that had already killed some of their cattle.

After resting there during the heat of the day and helping to finish the strong net the villagers had been preparing, Ojas and his band, now reinforced by thirty young men, resumed their march in the afternoon. One of the new recruits, nicknamed Lopāśa by his fellows, knew the country about those parts fairly well. He said that there were several watering places on the river bank frequented by animals and he suggested that one or two of their number should be sent forward as scouts to each spot. Then they would know in what place to set up their net snare before they began driving operations. Meanwhile the rest could prepare bundles of torches of which, in truth, they could not have too many.

This advice being accepted, the scouts were chosen and Lopāśa pointed out the directions in which they were to go. Ojas and Āyu, having decided to go to the most distant of these waterholes, set out immediately. In a few moments, however, they were overtaken by one of their companions who called out: "here, Ojas, you had better have my slip-noose."

"Why?" exclaimed Ojas, "I go to scout, not yet to catch lions. The thong will impede me."

"Not if you coil it up as I do," remarked his friend.

Still Ojas hesitated but Āyu said, "yes, brother, take it. It may prove useful."

Thus persuaded, Ojas took it and coiled it over his right shoulder and the two brothers strode out in order to reach their destination before dusk. In the open country they kept up a great pace but in the undergrowth of the jungle near the river bank they were obliged to move slowly and with caution. They kept a sharp look-out for snakes especially when they had to crawl on hands and knees. At last they came to a clearing near which were some rocks. "This is the place," whispered Ojas as he and his brother wriggled noiselessly up the bare slope of a rock, "look, there are animal tracks. We must lie very still and watch."

Shortly afterwards they heard slight rustling noises and from the undergrowth came a small troop of antelope. The male leader of the herd sniffed the air and, seeming satisfied that the coast was clear of enemies, led the others down the slight slope of hard earth sparsely covered with tufts of coarse grass to drink their fill in the muddy water.

Āyu began again to glance round him on every side. Suddenly he touched his brother's arm and nodded towards another rock not far from them. Ojas, looking in that direction, could see the gleaming eyes of a big creature lying very flat upon his rock motionless save for the slow movement of the tip of his tail.

When had the creature come there? They had heard nothing and the antelope had scented neither him nor them. "Not so strange after all," thought Ojas, "in this stifling air. The Thunder God must soon be letting loose his bolts. I can hardly breathe." Meanwhile Āyu was thinking what a lucky escape theirs had been for the beast might have chosen their own rock!

It was obvious that the lion, if lion it was, was waiting for the deer to come up out of the water in order to spring down upon one of them as they passed beneath him. He was doomed to disappointment.

A movement in the bush caused the leader of the herd to lift up his head. He may have caught sight of those baleful eyes or he may have disliked the company of the huge boar that now trotted into the open. Whatever the reason may have been, he tossed his head and plunged into the river followed by his companions.

The disappointed watcher on the rock with a ear-splitting roar sprang down from his post to wreak his vengeance upon the creature that had, so he seemed to think, driven off his easy prey. But, warned by the sudden outburst of noise, the boar, who feared no living creature, stood in his tracks facing his enemy. With his short forefoot he pawed the ground; the hairs bristled on his neck; with sharp grunts he challenged the intruder to try his worst. The lion, for now Ojas and Āyu recognized it as such from descriptions they had heard, hesitated in his angry career and began to walk with slow catlike tread in a circle,

seeking his chance for a spring upon his adversary's back. The boar as slowly turned so as to keep his face ever towards his foe.

Twice was the circle completed. Then the lion, becoming impatient, began to crouch for a spring but, before he could get his hindlegs properly in position, the boar, like a flash of lightning, charged at him. The lion, taken by surprise, to save himself leaped into the air over the oncoming beast. The valiant boar was too angry to seek refuge in flight. Perhaps he realized that he might simply be running away into the jaws of the lion's mate who was sure to be somewhere within call. He turned to settle this enemy before aid could reach him.

The lion, however, was the first to turn and so had the advantage for he sprang immediately to prevent, if he could, another charge. But the boar impetuously dashed forward again thereby causing the lion to misjudge his distance. This time, however, the boar did not pass completely under him. The cruel hind claws of his foe fell on his hindquarters. But the intrepid creature, grunting vehemently and exerting all his strength, heaved his body backwards making the lion lose his balance and leave his flank exposed for a brief second. The boar had fallen back on to him. With a sharp twist of his head he ripped open the quivering flank with one of his formidable tushes. The lion struck out madly with all his paws, roaring with pain the while, and, throwing his enemy off him, inflicted a dreadful wound across his face and neck.

Then they lay motionless for a space of time, bathed in blood, within a few feet of each other. Each tried to rise for a final blow but in vain. Death was stealing rapidly upon them and their growls and grunts grew fainter and fainter until they ceased.

Ojas and Āyu had watched this heroic duel with a fascination stronger than any they had ever experienced. Jumping down from their rock to examine the creatures at close quarters, they stood mutely gazing at these gallant adversaries now joined in death. A low growl aroused them.

"What? the old lion is not dead yet!" said Ojas in astonishment taking a pace backwards.

"No," said Āyu, "'tis not from him the sound came but from over yonder."

"We must get out of this as quickly as we can," remarked Ojas, "it is growing dark. Quick, let's string our bows."

Rapidly each bent his bowshaft and fitted the loose end of the bowstring to its notch. Each took an arrow from his quiver but Ojas placed his in his left hand by the side of the bowshaft and kept his spear in his right hand. Āyu dropped his spear and fitted an arrow to his bow.

Back to back they stood peering through the dusk. The purring and growling noises seemed to come from all sides of them.

Twang went Āyu's bow and the arrow sped to its mark, one of a pair of glowing eyes moving towards him. There was a roar of pain that ceased almost as soon as

it began and the sound of a body falling against the dry twigs of a bush.

"The lioness and her cubs," exclaimed Ojas, "did you kill one just now? Ah, there she is!"

Āyu was fitting a second arrow whilst his brother was speaking. He dared not turn round but he heard with joy the impact of the spear upon a soft body and a most dreadful roaring which seemed to shake the solid ground itself.

"I caught her sideways," shouted Ojas, "she is coming forward. Pass me your spear. No, don't; no need. She is dragging her hind legs, my spear is sticking in her side; it has taken the power out of her legs. Praised be Indra the mighty hunter!"

From the bush there came a full-grown cub. He moved quickly over to his injured mother who was still roaring, though less loudly, with the pain. Some message seemed to pass between them for the cub turned resolutely on the killers and prepared to spring. Āyu let fly his arrow but it only inflicted a flesh wound and enraged the beast yet more. The poison on the arrow tip would need some hours to take effect. Ojas was fitting an arrow to his bow. The great muscles of the creature were taut for the spring. Neither youth could be ready in time. In the next moment both would be struck down. In a state of intense feverish anxiety they waited, fearing the worst.

Then a most strange thing happened. Upon the beast almost at the very moment of his spring fell a long white body snarling and seeking for his throat.

The furious lion turned on this foe shaking his head violently and striking out with his powerful paw. The white body lay inert. But the victor was struck by two arrows that recalled him to his former foes. With hideous snarls and lashing tail he turned again to his interrupted attack and bounded forward.

Āyu's spear still lay on the ground out of his immediate reach. He was stooping to lay hold of it. Ojas was drawing forth another arrow from his quiver. Both were for the moment defenceless. Death or dreadful mutilation seemed inevitable.

When scarcely ten paces distant from them the lion gave a great leap into the air and fell with a thud upon the ground. To the astonished ears of the brothers came shouts from a rock. "Indra, ho Indra!"

So intent had they been on their defence and deafened by the roaring and snarling that they had neither heard nor seen the approach of Lopāśa and two of his friends. It was Lopāśa's spear that had saved them.

Leaping from the rock, Lopāśa now ran forward. "Rejoice, friends," he shouted to the others, "they are unhurt. Not a second too soon did we come. We heard the beasts roaring and hasted with all speed but this jungle is a dreadful tangle to the feet." This last remark was addressed to the brothers who now seemed to awake out of their bewilderment at this sudden turn of their fortune.

"Everduring thanks to you, Lopāśa," cried Ojas, "you did indeed come not a moment too soon.

Indra, to whom I addressed many a silent prayer, has helped us twice most signally. Yonder lies our first saviour."

They moved across to where the white body lay stained with crimson patches. Ojas gave a loud cry, "Why," he said, "'tis Arjuna, my white hound: he has tracked me hither. May every friend prove his devotion as nobly as thou hast done, my Arjuna!"

Āyu wept as they piled stones over the body previous to their departure from the scene of their enthralling adventures. It was now quite dark. They debated what to do. Lopāśa said he could lead them but feared lest some might get separated and lose the track. Then Āyu remembered the slip-noose and suggested their holding on to the long thong. Accordingly, with Lopāśa leading the way and each of them having a hand on the line, they made their way slowly back to the bivouac of their hunting band. There was little sleep for any that night. The tale that Ojas and Āyu had to tell was too thrilling.

CHAPTER III

Rack and Ruin

On the next day Āyu proposed their going back to the river bank to fetch away the lion skins, trophies that would win them great renown. Lopāśa laughed and said: "By this hour, there'll be no skins left nor flesh on their bones; the jackals, hyenas and vultures have had a rare feasting."

"Not so," replied Āyu, "the poisoned arrows will have made the flesh distasteful."

"Ho, ho," remarked one of the others, "as if those carrion-eaters care a jot about what they eat!"

"Well, this time," interposed Ojas, "they'll pay for their undiscerning tastes with their lives."

Some were for carrying out Āyu's suggestion but others, pointing to the sky now becoming overcast, said that the rains were not far off. It were better to get home to their village and help in the removal of their household goods and cattle to the pur before Father Rudra and his lusty sons the Maruts swept across the heavens.

"Indra," said they, "has had a long fight with the demon Vṛtra this season and the udders of the cloud-cows will be bursting with the milk of the skies."

Ojas, realizing the truth of this and desiring to reach his home whilst there was yet time, told his brother that they must abandon hope of recovering their trophies and make all speed homewards.

Quickly they made their preparations for their return journey and marched with speed. As they reached Lopāśa's village, the thunder was rolling continuously and the fiery forked lightning was splitting open, almost without cessation, the distant but solid banks of blue-black clouds. In a very short time, torrents of rain would fall and make any further journeying extremely hazardous.

Ojas, therefore, accepted the cordial invitation of Lopāśa's father to stay with him. He, his brother and their companions then took their share in loading the waggons with fodder and household gear and in driving the flocks and herds in the gathering murky gloom to the palisaded and entrenched pur on rising ground two miles distant.

Scarcely had they and the other households of the village, larger and wealthier than that from which Ojas came, settled themselves in their refuge than the first sheets of rain, driven by a roaring wind, hissed in their recoil from the hard-baked soil.

For five days did Indra rage mightily and the howling Maruts rush hither and thither on the chariots of the storm winds. The villagers looked anxiously at the foaming, wide-spreading, raging river upon whose flood all sorts of débris were being hurtled along. Earnestly they prayed to Agni, to Indra, to all the gods, to spare their homesteads, pouring out copious libations of milk and ghee—the utmost they could do at the time for they had no Soma plants with them from which to press the juice that rejoiced the hearts and renewed the vigour of the gods. However, their utmost was

effective, for the river, carving for itself a new bed on the further side, swept most of its destructive force down that and left the village itself but slightly damaged.

The sight of the divine Sarasvatī in such a spate of rushing waters a she had never seen before made Ojas tremble for the safety of his own beloved village and dear ones. He longed also to tell his father that Āyu and he were safe, for the old man, he knew well, would be ceaselessly fretting about the welfare of his absent sons in spite of the reassuring words of his mother who had such a touching simple faith in his own wisdom and good sense. He smiled as he thought upon it.

On the sixth morning came a welcome break in the rains and the sun shone out again with genial warmth to refresh and encourage the hearts of men. Now for the first time could the villagers see how their homesteads had been spared. One or two at the upper end of the settlement had completely disappeared; some others had their pillars and side walls knocked down leaving their roofs hanging awry. But these pillars, walls and roofs could be quickly repaired. Most of the dwellings, though still standing in shallow water, seemed sturdily upright. Their earnest prayers for divine favour and their solemn libations to Agni, protector, guest and friend of man, had caused the fury of Sarasvatī to sweep aside. The raging current could be discerned in its new bed and on the further side the flood covered the earth for many miles.

"Now," said Lopāśa's father to Ojas, "is the time for you to hasten homewards and see if all is well with

your parents and friends. I pray you may find them as miraculously saved as we have been. As you see, on this side the floods are slight at this place. I trust it may be so higher up the river. Keep a stout heart."

"Sir," replied Ojas, "you have shown us much kindness and to your son's courage I owe my life and Āyu's. I hope it may some day be within our power to repay you both. And now we hasten to follow your advice and depart before the clouds hide the face of Sūrya once more."

Forthwith Ojas went to call together Āyu and his comrades to prepare for an immediate start. Their kind friends loaded them with as many provisions as they could conveniently carry and offered to give them an ass to carry more if Ojas thought it necessary. But Ojas declined their offer saying that they would travel faster without a beast of burden.

The little band then set out striking inland away from the floods. Their progress was slow because their feet sank into the water-logged soil. It was hard work floundering and scrambling in the mud. The moisture-laden air, the hot rays of the sun and their burdens of food and weapons caused them grave discomfort. Their ears were deafened by the ceaseless croaking of myriads of frogs announcing their joy at being freed from their earthy prisons.

After journeying thus for some time, they changed their direction so as to keep within touch of the river. Their hearts sank to see that, as they travelled on, the floods on this side of the river were spread out

more widely than in the region they had started from. They were obliged to make wide détours again. The landmarks that had guided them on their journey down were blotted out. They walked on and on growing wearier with every step. They snatched what sleep they could on beds of leaves and twigs. The frogs kept up their maddening din and the insects bit them until they bled in every limb.

On the morning of the fourth day, utterly weary, with little food remaining and unable to determine exactly where they were, they found themselves in desperate plight. Unless they reached human habitation soon, they would starve for it was impossible to eat game killed by their poisoned weapons.

"Surely," said Ojas, "about over there should be the village of those antelope-thieves. Can you see anything of it, Āyu?"

"No," answered Āyu, "not one of us can see any signs of it or of its pur. I fear both have been swept away in this ocean of waters."

"We must press on," said Ojas with a heavy heart full of foreboding. "Let us move in that direction." He pointed the way and they turned and followed him with sad hearts.

The heavens were again overcast. The welcome spell of fine weather had ended. Ojas and his comrades hurried onwards fervently hoping that they were on the right path. Their eyes were ever searching for familiar landmarks. Amidst the waste of waters on their right the current of the river was clearly to be

seen swirling along. The wind was rising, heralding the oncoming of blinding rain. Ojas urged his companions to yet greater speed.

At last he halted and shading his eyes with his hand looked searchingly along the river. "Look," he cried, "that must be our pur standing like an island in the waters. What say you?"

"It is, it is," they shouted, "praise be to the lord of creatures. He has spared our people."

They hurried on. The rain began to descend in sheets that almost blinded them.

"Shall we ever get there?" cried Āyu.

"We must, or else we die," answered his brother.

"Come, let us plunge across, the waters are not deep and all of us can swim if we must. When darkness falls we must go one behind the other linking ourselves by aid of our bowshafts."

Ojas led the way. In single file they followed him splashing along in the knee-deep waters. Progress was slow; the rain lashed their bodies and blinded their eyes. They threw away their spears and, unslinging their bowshafts, they spliced them together with the bowstrings and made a line to cling to and keep themselves from separating. Sometimes they had to swim. Ojas cheered them on. "A few more strokes," he said, "and all shall be in safety."

Though 'the few more strokes' became in fact many, yet not one of that great-hearted band faltered. Their feet touched ground once more. They splashed on up the slope, shouting for the gate of the pur to be opened.

Their shouts were heard and answered. The heavy wooden gate was swung open. Through it the weary band, looking like half-drowned sheep, stumbled and lay panting on the rain-soaked earth within. When the others had somewhat recovered, they were astonished and alarmed to find how few there were who stood about them but Ojas seemed to be too exhausted even to hear the entreaties of the fair girl who was bending over him. When, at last, he lifted his head and realized who she was that called upon him so insistently to answer her, he sighed deeply and said in a faint voice, "Ah! Little Sister, Little Sister!" Again his head drooped.

"He is dying," cried Ghoṣā in anguish, "alas! he is dying."

"Here, child," said a woman who had in the meantime run back to a hut for a bowl of milk, "make him drink this."

Ghoṣā then placed her arm under his head and, raising it, put the bowl to his lips. Still in a dazed condition, Ojas slowly drank the milk. Reviving quickly, he looked up and scanned the little group that stood in silent sympathy about him.

"Where is my father?" he cried, "and where is my mother?"

"Alas! alas! brother," replied Ghoṣā sorrowfully, "they are not here, they have perished in the flood. We alone survive; only three households of all our village are left. Indra smote the mountains more fiercely than ever and unlocked the springs more rapidly. The fair-flowing Sarasvatī rose into a

mountain wall of water and swept those that followed us away beyond our help."

"Little Flower," exclaimed Āyu as he took from her hand the empty bowl, "tell us then by what good fortune thou didst escape."

"Urged on by the voices of our dear parents I floundered through the rain and mud away from the river bank. They followed me at no great distance behind. I turned for a moment's rest. The waters were rising but our parents were within reach of safety. At least, so I thought. But, alas! my mother was struck by a piece of floating wreckage, lost her footing and fell. My father stooped to lift her up but more wreckage borne along on the swirling waters struck them both down. I saw them no more. My heart stood still, my senses swam and I fell in a swoon. I, too, should have been drowned, had not one of these neighbours of ours seeing me fall rushed back, picked me up and brought me here."

Then the hearts of Ojas, Āyu and of their six comrades were broken and they lifted up their voices and wailed aloud in bitter grief.

CHAPTER IV

"Fresh Woods and Pastures New"

THEN followed for the young men a sorrowful time shut up in their huts with their sad thoughts and with little else to do for many days except to listen to the pitiless rain. Ojas, gifted like his father in song and speech, gave relief to their swelling hearts by the words of his lamentation.

"Ah parents dear, whither are ye gone? Would that I might find you! Borne along upon the flood of swirling waters, with bodies bruised and battered, to what regions of the earth are ye departed beyond our ken? Who will close your eyelids, who will bind your feet to save your dear spirits from restless wanderings to and fro in this cruel world, who will lay your bones reverently within their houses of earth? We know not. But what we can now do for your comfort, we shall. We pray to Yama, he who was the first of mortals to die and tread the dustless paths of heaven to the abode of the Shining Ones, to send his messengers to search you out. May the wide-nostriled, four-eyed sons of Saramā, diligently searching, find you and lead you to Him, Pretarāja, he who found out the path to the place whither our ancient fathers have departed! We pray to Pūṣan, he who beholds the entire universe, leading the way, to go before you. We shall go forth and win great riches wherewith to fee worthily the wise ones that they, the knowing ones, may offer perfect sacrifices to all the gods to persuade

them from hindering your going from restless wanderings to the abode of bliss with our ancient fathers."

Each of the listeners applied these prayers to his own relatives and friends and each found solace in the fervour with which he repeated the words.

After many days the rains ceased for a while and the sun shone out again. "Come," said Ojas, "let us go and find occupation for our hands to lighten the burden of our spirits. Some of us can mend these leaking walls and roofs, others can go forth and fetch in fodder for the cattle."

Everyone was glad to stretch his limbs again in the genial warmth of the sunshine. There was much to be done whilst the weather was fine. Damp garments of wool and of skins had to be spread out to dry and trenches to be dug afresh to drain off the water from between the huts and the cattle sheds. The ground being so sodden, many of the posts that supported the roof structures of their simple buildings were loosening and slipping away. Stones had to be fetched with which to strengthen their foundations. Then the leaky roofs were stripped off to let in the sunshine to dry the interiors, whilst from the inland regions reeds, grasses and branches were being fetched wherewith to make a fresh thatch. To cross the floods more easily they constructed rafts out of the timbers of some of the huts that, alas, stood empty. The young men made several journeys to procure this thatching material and grass for the cattle and sheep. The goats too were remembered. For them succulent leaves and tender shoots were brought over in great quantities.

Lastly, they were sent to cut certain kinds of timber required by one of the three surviving householders who was a carpenter and metal worker.

Then, with everyone of their little company, man, woman and child, setting to work with a will, the spaces between the bamboo rafters were soon filled in with long straight bundles of reeds, grass and leafy branches all tightly bound together and covered with clay. Below them they stretched skins from the main roof beams to the walls. Similar thatching repairs were made in the interstices between the closely-planted posts that formed the framework of the walls. Thus they prepared themselves to endure with more comfort the onset of further rain.

"Sir," said Ojas the next day to the man who had sent them to get timber, "we have nothing to do. Will you not instruct us in your craft?"

"Willingly," he replied, "it was for that purpose I sent you to cut timber. My fellow-craftsmen having perished, I must train up young men to take their place."

So saying he set up his primitive forge of stone in one of the empty huts. The fire was fanned into a fierce heat by one of the young men who vigorously waved an eagle's wing. The craftsman, at Ojas' request, promised to show them the making of a wheel and fire was needed for boring the holes in the axle-box or hub into which the ends of axle and of spokes were to fit.

"Fortunately, I have found an old block of seasoned wood," said the old craftsman, "axle-boxes can be

fashioned only from such." With a hatchet he shaped a solid round piece from the block and with the red hot end of a metal rod burnt out a large hole in the centre. "Herein," he explained, "lies the chief difficulty, unless the hole be truly round and smooth the wheel will not turn easily."

"To me it seems," said Āyu, "that the chief difficulty is to get the outer rim so shaped and fitted to the spokes as to remain a perfect round."

"Yes, that is difficult truly and fitting the metal tyre so that it is not twisted off is a job that only experienced wheelwrights can accomplish. Had I the metal here I could show you how it is done. Now, you young men set to work on the spokes and take this one as your model." With these words, he picked up a spoke from an old damaged wheel lying near him. "Yes," he continued, "the making of a perfect wheel is a work of art,—it takes the craftsmanship of the Ṛbhus themselves. In olden days wheels were made solid, shaped from tree trunks: they were small and heavy: now they are large, light and yet strong. Truly he who first made and used a wheel was a great benefactor to men."

With these and similar jobs Ojas and his companions occupied themselves from day to day until the rainy season was over and the floods receded. Very sorrowfully did the little company revisit the site of their village. Not a trace of fences, sheds or homesteads was visible. Only a few of the older and more firmly-rooted trees remained to indicate where their houses once stood.

The three surviving families, taking counsel together, decided not to build on the old site but to push higher up the river and join themselves to another community for greater safety. Land there was in plenty and to be had for the asking. For workers they must raid the nearest Dasyu villages and carry off slaves from them. The young men promised to help them settle down in another spot.

Accordingly, they loaded their waggons and set off, driving the cattle, the sheep, the asses and the goats ahead of them. The women and children, when tired of walking and shouting around the flocks and herds, rode on the waggons amidst the household gear.

In two days they met another band of their own tribe who like themselves were seeking a new home with what little they had saved from the floods. They also were a small remnant, sole survivors of a large and prosperous settlement yet a day's march up the river. They decided to unite and found a new settlement where they now were but not so close to the river as before.

The next few weeks were busily spent on marking out the areas for their homesteads, cutting and shaping timber for posts, collecting bamboos and thatching materials, assigning fields to the different householders and building their wooden houses. In the centre of the settlement they built a spacious hall or Sabhā for their meetings and social gatherings and therein they elected as their grāmaṇī or headman the skilful worker in wood and metal whose craftsmanship was so

invaluable and whose tact and common-sense had impressed them all.

As soon as each new house was ready, the house-father took possession of it, carrying in with him fire and water after those present had been regaled by a draught of good liquor mixed with melted butter and poured out for them into wooden bowls by the mistress of the new home. Thus "with water that kills consumption and with Agni, the Immortal One," did they enter and possess their new dwellings.

When, however, the life of the new village was in full swing again, Ojas and Āyu decided to leave their friends and seek adventure under the banner of the Tṛtsu Divodāsa, chieftain of their tribe, whose distant kinsmen they were. Ghoṣā wished to accompany them but, after some persuasion, she consented to remain where she was in the care of the family who had rescued her. Her brothers promised to send for her as soon as they could.

CHAPTER V

In Quest of Adventure

When Ojas and Āyu announced their resolve, their friends tried to dissuade them but neither was to be turned from his purpose.

"Have we not vowed," they declared, "to go forth and win riches wherewith to perform sacrifices for the welfare of our departed ones? Let others seek wealth by ploughing and sowing and by breeding cattle. It is a way of life that devours time and is uncertain. Better for us twain, Rājanyas, to fare forth, gain the favour of princes and by fighting win rich booty."

"The favour of princes is more fickle than that of Pṛthivī," replied the grāmaṇī, "and a warrior's life is short."

"None the less will we go forth to find in danger and excitement a relief to our sad thoughts."

"Go then with our blessings," they cried, "and so that ye go not unprovided, take these small gifts."

Thereupon they pressed upon them for their acceptance spears, arrows, corselets of leather covered with metal plates sewed on to them close together, and loose-fitting boots of untanned leather.

"If only ye would stay a while, I could fashion you helmets," said the grāmaṇī.

"Nay," replied Ojas, "we shall beg them of our prince."

"No need for that," exclaimed the richest of the newly-found allies. "Take these bracelets and breast ornaments and barter them for the headpieces."

Warmly thanking their kind friends, Ojas and Āyu each took from them a sheaf of arrows, a spear, coverings for their feet and the proffered ornaments. Meanwhile the women crowded round them bringing amulets of the Jaṅgiḍa plant and Kuśa grass to protect them against diseases and against all who might wish them evil, bracelets of snake skins to render them invisible to robbers and charms against evil omens.

Thus provided, they solemnly invoked the care of the Lokapālas, the divine warders of the regions, and called upon Pūṣan to conduct them by ways most free from fear and danger. Then they set forth, without misgivings, to seek what might befall them.

Following the downward course of the Sarasvatī, they hastened past the site of their former happy home. They felt too sad at heart to linger there and desired to start on their new careers as soon as possible. So they came to Lopāśa's village to visit their former comrades. When their sad tidings were told, much sympathy was shown to them and they were offered a new home by Lopāśa's parents but Ojas repeated their firm resolve with their reasons for acting upon it. However, he gratefully accepted their offer to send later on to fetch Ghoṣā to live with them as if she were their own daughter until Ojas could make a home for her. Lopāśa would have gone with the brothers, had not his father forbidden his going away just then when every able-bodied man was needed

for work on the damaged fields. "Besides," he added, "who knows how soon the war-drums will be calling us out again to serve the restless ambition of Divodāsa?"

So, after a pleasant halt for a few days, Ojas and Āyu pursued their journey alone towards the chieftain's own settlement.

When about two days' march from their objective, the brothers came, early in the morning, to a very pleasantly-situated village embosomed in trees. Three big trees in a clump seemed to dominate the scene. "That," said Ojas, "is a lovely spot; I shall call it the Three-Tree Village. Let us go and see what sort of folk dwell there."

Āyu consenting, they crossed an open meadow and strolled towards the river bank, from whence came sounds of laughter, song and general merriment.

"Well," said Āyu, "the folk here seem a happy set. We might halt awhile and make more friends."

When they reached the riverside they found a group of women and girls standing ankle deep in the stream filling large earthen pitchers and some of them, now and then, mischievously splashing one another with water. It was not difficult to see that some amongst them were slaves, dark, short and flat-nosed whilst others were obviously free-born maidens, tall, fair-skinned and pleasant-featured.

The slave women hoisted the heavy pitchers on to their heads and came in single file up the bank followed by the free-born maidens in groups laughing and chatting merrily. They were not a whit abashed to

see two young strangers standing there in open admiration.

A tall handsome girl, who seemed to be the merriest and most light-hearted of them all, exclaimed, as she and her companions came near them, "Ho, strangers, whence come ye? See that ye do not admire us too openly, else will the young men of our village fall upon you and beat you."

"Thanks for the warning, Fairest of the Fair," replied Ojas, "but why should we be beaten for doing that which we cannot help doing?"

"Kind Sir, thou flatterest us but our young men will reply, 'why should we be blamed for doing that which we cannot help doing?' An answer, I know, that will not pour balm on your sore backs."

"We are Āryans of good lineage and our backs will not need balm but our hearts may, if ye prove unkind."

"By your looks ye seem to be brothers. May the twin Aśvins watch over you!"

"Brothers we are and orphaned by the flood. We go to take service with our chieftain Divodāsa. Let those who wish us evil, beware. We come as harmless wayfarers seeking refreshment in this place for a day."

"Come then with us, I shall show you where ye may lodge."

Slowly then they wended their way by the track across the meadow. Ojas' eyes were blind to all else but his fair guide. Suddenly a scream arose from the women in front who began running hither and thither like frightened peafowl. Many dropped their pitchers in their alarm. Then Ojas, lifting up his eyes, saw

the cause of their panic. A war-chariot was dashing down upon them, the driver having lost control of his pair of mettlesome dappled steeds.

With a shout, Ojas leapt forward, a little to one side of the runaway horses. Springing at the outer bridle rein of the animal nearest to him, he threw his weight backward and thus turned the chariot aside. He could not bring it to a standstill but, dragged along desperately clinging to the rein, he caused it to move in a wide circle. When the chariot, with the driver shouting curses, had nearly completed the circle, Āyu, watching his chance, sprang at the other horse's head and so helped Ojas to bring it to a stand. The horses with outstretched necks were blowing hard, their ears were set back and their eyes flashed. Unless firmly held, they would bolt headlong again.

The driver, a young man, rather too florid and stout for his age, was bursting with rage instead of being grateful.

"May demons tear you to pieces and vultures and jackals feed on them!" he shouted almost incoherently, "what mean ye by your cursed impudent interference? Ye have ruined my steeds for chariot racing. Curse you for damned strangers!"

"'Tis a pair of goats thou shouldst be driving," said Ojas quietly whilst the charioteer was getting his breath for further cursing. "Didst not see these women here? Thou wert like to have killed one or two and run into heavy debt for the blood-price. Thanks, not curses, should have come from thy mouth."

Spluttering with rage, the charioteer bent forward to lash his whip across the face of Ojas who sprang back releasing the rein. At that same moment Āyu smote the horse nearest him under the belly causing it to rear just at the moment when its yoke fellow, finding restraint gone from its head, was darting forward. The chariot was violently jerked and twisted. The driver lost his balance and fell flat on the ground. Ojas and Āyu sprang upon him ere he could rise and with the long lash of his whip bound his wrists behind him and his ankles together. Then they lifted him choking with impotent rage and laid him under a tree.

"Stay there," they said, "and hold converse with stinging ants and other insects for a while."

Seeing these little creatures swarming towards him, the unfortunate fellow started rolling away from the tree. His chagrin was not decreased by the merry peals of laughter that came from the girls.

"Apālā, Apālā," cried one of the other girls, "dost thou know who it is rolling yonder? 'Tis Dvaita himself! Thy father's wrath will be bitter against thee for mocking at the bridegroom he has chosen for thee. Beware!"

The tall handsome girl who had so attracted Ojas, thus addressed, replied: "What care I? Dvaita deserves it all—the selfish brute that he is."

Turning to Ojas and Āyu she warned them to depart soon from the village for, out of their kindness to herself and her companions, they had incurred the enmity of a very dangerous man.

Then they all resumed their walk so dramatically interrupted and came upon the chariot dashed to pieces against a tree. The horses, with the reins dragging behind them, were by now far away in the distance. Their owner sat on the ground shouting curses and calling on his servants to come and unbind him.

CHAPTER VI

Midnight Music

WHEN they reached the first house in the village, Apālā said to them: "Brave strangers, go ye in here where my mother's sister dwells. She will give you food and tell you who Dvaita is. For my sake ye must leave this place as soon as ye are refreshed."

Ojas was preparing a pretty speech in reply but Apālā moved away and spoke to a slave woman who signed to the brothers quickly to follow her. So they turned in at the gate regretting that Apālā had not heard their murmured thanks.

The mistress of the house, a comely matron with a smiling face, listened to the brief but graphic tale of the slave and forthwith beckoned to Ojas and Āyu to step into the house.

She stood gazing at them admiringly and chuckling softly, "Well," said she, "so Dvaita has met his match at last. Ho, ho, what a tale for this dull old village! Trussed up with his own whiplash! O why went I not forth with Apālā this morning?"

"Mistress," replied Ojas, "I am sorry your eyes missed the spectacle, but tell me, this Dvaita, who is he that he should lord it so in this fair village?"

"Stranger, Dvaita is my brother-in-law's chosen bridegroom for Apālā. He is wealthy, having just succeeded his father in the lordship of the family. Vyoman my brother-in-law is the grāmaṇī, a man of substance and great authority but, being greedy of

yet more influence, is obstinate in disregarding Apālā's dislike of the fellow."

"Has he no regard for his daughter's happiness?"

"He says he has; he accuses us of misunderstanding Dvaita. This incident may open his eyes but somehow I doubt it. He will blame the women for crossing the meadow; he will blame you for interfering without good cause; oh, he will find ninety and nine excuses, for there be none so blind as those who will not see."

"But what is to hinder him hastening on the match without delay?"

"My husband Suketu and I will trick him if he does; we shall carry off our beloved niece to my husband's brother's house and my sister will aid and abet us. Opinion in this village will now begin to show itself against Dvaita. For that we have to thank you. But your lives are in danger. I shall give you food and drink and then you must depart quickly for Apālā's sake."

As soon as they had refreshed themselves the brothers thanked their hostess and slipped out unobserved into the neighbouring forest through which they had been passing a few hours earlier.

"Āyu," said Ojas, "let us hide here a few days. My eyes ache for another sight of the fair one."

"Ah! brother," replied Āyu, "war may wait—but love cannot—is that it? Well, I am with you. Dvaita is sure to give us occasion for excitement."

"We must be on our guard against him."

"Well then, we must take it in turns to sleep."

Ojas agreed that this would be advisable. He then sought for a good hiding place in which to set up their shelter of boughs and leaves. This was made as inconspicuous as possible. Towards evening they strolled cautiously to the edge of the woodland towards the meadow near the river to catch a glimpse, if possible, of Apālā and her maidens. But, to their disappointment, they saw no one except young men driving their chariots.

"Getting themselves ready for a race, evidently," said Āyu, "Dvaita is not there; I suppose he has not repaired his chariot."

"He may not have recovered his horses yet," replied Ojas, "I expect he is hunting for them."

"And hunting for us too," said Āyu.

And that, in fact, is exactly what Dvaita was doing, for the steeds were a valuable pair though not yet well trained. Having found and recaptured the runaways, Dvaita set men to track the strangers who had put him to such shame before women. Woe betide them, if they were still within reach!

Though Ojas had said they had better be on their guard against Dvaita, he was now so wrapt in love thoughts that he had forgotten the risks they ran by staying there. But Āyu was more wide-awake. He climbed into a tree telling Ojas to follow his example so that they could get a better view of their surroundings.

"Ha, there's Dvaita with his horses: he is talking to a man who is pointing towards our shelter—" said Āyu, "They have tracked us down."

"Well," answered Ojas, "they won't know that the shelter is ours in particular."

. "O yes, they will. I left my cloak and spear there."

"That's awkward: now they will track us to this tree: come on, we had better get down. We can't fight from a tree."

"Wait a minute, let's watch what Dvaita is going to do."

Dvaita was now talking to a number of men and by his gestures seemed to be planning to surround the shelter when the brothers had returned to it. The group moved off with the horses to the village.

"Ho, ho," said Ojas, "he is planning to attack us by night. We must prepare a surprise for him. They are not likely to come till dark; we have still some hours of daylight. But go very carefully; someone may have been left on the watch for our return."

They climbed down from their leafy perches and with great caution moved towards their shelter. Ojas was right. A man had been left to report their return. But he was not given the chance for the brothers pounced upon him unawares and carried him, gagged and bound, to a small ditch some distance away in which they hid him.

Then they set to work and soon prepared a wide shallow trench around their shelter. Into this they put thorn bushes and covered them over with earth and leaves. "They won't see that in the dark," said Ojas, "neither shall we *see* the fun but we shall *hear* it. Let's up a tree and wait for some musical curses."

For some hours they waited. It was weary work sitting cramped in a tree. Then they heard stealthy footsteps. The men were getting into position. Suddenly Dvaita's voice rapped out a command. There was a yell and a sound of running feet. Then arose the music that Ojas had spoken of; oaths and curses from many mouths.

"Now, let's run for it," whispered Ojas, "we should not waste more time here. Did Dvaita fall in?"

"I don't know, I could not distinguish his voice in the chorus: but, being what he is, I should say he stayed behind out of danger."

"A pity," answered Ojas, "I should love to know for a certainty. We must come back here again some day to find out."

"It won't be that that will bring you back here, at no distant date either, brother," laughingly exclaimed Āyu as he ran with swift strides beside him.

CHAPTER VII

War-Clouds

OJAS and his brother reached their destination, the chieftain's own village, sooner than they had expected because the jungle was less dense in that region and the paths were well trodden.

"There seems to be much stir and bustle here, Āyu," said Ojas, "what can be the cause?"

"Let's ask yonder charioteer," replied Āyu, "he seems a jovial fellow."

So saying, followed by Ojas, he approached the young man as he was leading a pair of fine horses towards a gaily-painted war-chariot. "Sir," said Āyu, "we are two brothers, strangers newly arrived, and desire to know why there is this stir and movement at a time of day when men are usually at work in the fields or out hunting."

"Give a hand with these horses and then I'll tell you," was the answer.

The brothers thereupon helped him to harness the steeds to the car patting their glossy necks to quieten them. But the animals were too fresh to stand still.

"Stand clear," shouted the charioteer, "your answer must wait."

Jumping on the chariot and seizing the reins in both hands, the driver let the impatient steeds bound forward. Far across the meadows he drove, skilfully avoiding all obstacles and keeping his balance wonderfully well in the chariot as it swayed and bumped on

he uneven ground. His skill in turning abruptly round a tree almost on one wheel without disaster drew forth exclamations of praise from the two brothers.

On his return, the horses, panting and flecked with foam, were willing to take a rest. "There," said the driver with a laugh, "they'll stand quiet for a while and I can answer you."

"Sir," said Ojas, "your skill in driving is remarkable."

"That needs must be in a prince's charioteer," replied the other. "A warrior's fame depends more upon his driver's skill than men think. You wish to know why there is this stir. In a word the answer is 'war'. Go to yonder Sabhā and listen. Divodāsa our chieftain takes counsel with the elders and warriors of his clan and soon, doubtless, the war-drum will be sounded in all the villages of the Bharatas."

"That is good news for us," said Ojas, "we were lucklessly orphaned and made homeless by the floods and come to win a livelihood as soldiers of fortune."

"Then welcome indeed are ye, for to me, Citraratha, charioteer to Prince Sudās, war is as the breath of my nostrils."

Thanking him for his friendly welcome, Ojas and Āyu joined the throng of men, young and old, that was hastening to the spacious open-sided Sabhā hall and took up their stand by one of the stout pillars facing the chieftain's seat. They decided not to draw attention to themselves by asking questions. So they stood quietly in the jostling throng and kept their ears open.

Soon there was a sudden hush in the buzz of eager talk and all those within the hall rose to their feet whilst Divodāsa, his son and kinsmen, accompanied by Viśvāmitra, the purohit, entered and took their seats, the chieftain and his son upon two carved wooden stools and the others on the rush-matted floor.

Divodāsa, a tall commanding figure with a short grey beard, explained in a few sentences why he had summoned them and called upon Viśvāmitra to address them.

This remarkable man, destined to play a part in the history of his time even greater than he had already played, rose from his seat and thus began:

"Servant of Heaven, Beloved of Indra, Shield of the Bharatas, I have returned from my mission with all speed to bid thee prepare for war, for it grieves me to say that my efforts have failed. Śambara, the shameless one, despised of our Āryan gods, mocked me, ay even me, servant of Soma, Agni and Indra. I rehearsed to him the great things our gods had done for thee, O Atithigva: how they had scattered before thee the presumptuous Yadu people, and broken the might of the Turvaśa. The Pūrus had repented of their rashness in provoking thee and were now in firm alliance with us. No longer, I told him, could he pass through their territory unscathed to attack us. The Pārāvatas were reluctant for further contest against our matchless Indra nor could they, even if they wished, hinder the victorious march of the Tṛtsus to the Yamunā's banks. I warned him to beware of the anger of the mighty Bharatas."

" 'O Ārya,' he replied, 'your threats are idle. I laugh your gods to scorn: they shall be humbled by mine. The gods of the heavens shall fall beneath the gods of our goodly mother Earth, who shall be lords over them. My people will not hearken to your hermit-pilgrims. They have driven them forth from their midst. If, as you boast, your gods make you wealthy, then the greater will our booty be.' "
"And with more words of a like insolent sort did he make answer, the shameless one, contemner of our gods."

"What say ye, my kinsmen?" exclaimed Divodāsa, "there can be but one reply to such insolence, methinks."

"Ay, ay," they shouted with one voice, "to arms against this unbeliever. Sound the war-drum and lead us forth against this mleccha. Agni shall burn his gates with fire and destruction shall fall upon his strong places."

Standing by the side of Ojas was a young man dressed in a white robe and having his hair coiled up in a knot on the right side of his head, who had been scowling and muttering to himself all the time that Viśvāmitra had been speaking. Ojas had vainly tried to hear what he was saying but now that tongues were loosened and men were talking eagerly to one another, the young man spoke more distinctly.

"When will that fool of a Viśvāmitra learn wisdom? As well try to convert he-goats as that most stiff-necked of Dasyus! This ass of an 'All-Friend' cares not whom he admits to our Āryan faith."

"Why, Sir," said Ojas, "where is the harm in winning men to our true faith?"

. The young man turned sharply round on him and said, "What, are you of his faction? Know this, we Vasiṣṭhas approve not of these hypocritical conversions, of this easily-spoken lip-service to Agni and the Bright Ones. The Dasyu folk do not cease to worship their snake gods and their demons, whatever their chieftains may say. Indra, the Exalted One, vexes not himself with rabble of every kind: the linga-worshippers must not press in to share in our holy sacrifices."

Ojas was prevented from continuing the argument by Āyu pulling him away by the arm and saying, "Come, brother, let us find our good friend Citraratha and win an audience of his prince. We must attach ourselves to his retinue, if he will have us."

CHAPTER VIII

Divodasa is Initiated

CITRARATHA readily agreed to present the two brothers to his prince. Accordingly, soon after the assembly broke up, he ushered them into Sudās' apartment at one end of the hall in the royal mansion, a large house of wood that stood in the centre of the village. Here they found the Prince seated on a carved wooden stool. He was a sturdy young man of about five and twenty years of age but his short, trim, brown beard made him look older. His light brown hair fell in short straight locks almost to his broad shoulders. With ruddy cheeks, high-bridged straight nose, clear grey eyes and square chin he looked a handsome man of strong character.

After a few words of introduction by Citraratha, Ojas was bidden to speak. When the Prince had heard his tale and his claim to a distant relationship with the royal family, he smiled and said, "whether ye are kinsmen or not, I am attracted by your faces. Moreover, Citraratha, who is hard to please, befriends you. Ye are therefore welcome to join my retinue. My charioteer will teach you whatever ye need to know of chariots and of weapons; he is an excellent instructor." Thereupon he gave them a sign of dismissal.

Thanking him for these kind words the two brothers saluted him and followed the smiling Citraratha through the large hall into the open.

"You had better lodge with me, young men, until you have made your fortunes," said Citraratha

leading them to his own fair-sized house near by. "To-morrow I shall see how efficient you are with your weapons. Skill in the use of arms is a surer guard of life than mere courage. We shall have plenty of time for practice, for Divodāsa will be offering a great Soma sacrifice before setting out on the war-path. Indra loves the Soma exceedingly; it impels him to be mighty and richly to reward his votaries. We mortals must aid him before he will aid us."

In a very short while Citraratha discovered that the brothers needed little instruction in the use of the bow and of the spear. So he devoted the time to teaching them in turn the art of driving a war-chariot and the care of horses. He showed them how to drive so as to give the fighting man standing on the left full scope for his activities. They also learnt how to ride a horse. Being apt pupils and Citraratha being, as Sudās had said, an excellent instructor, the brothers acquired much skill in these new accomplishments.

Before very long Divodāsa instructed his purohita Viśvāmitra to announce by a herald a Soma sacrifice and to choose the priests. All people in the neighbourhood were invited to come and watch it. Accordingly, on the several days of the sacrificial ceremonies, a great and silent crowd assembled near the holy ground. Among them the three friends occupied prominent places. Āyu in particular wanted to see and learn all he could of these mysteries that exerted such influence on the fortunes of men. So the kind Citraratha made the young son of Vasiṣṭha, a priest with whom he was friendly, accompany them. "But,"

said he, "let us go only on those days when there are important ceremonies which can be seen. We shall wait for the first day of the initiation."

On the first dīkṣā day, accordingly, Citraratha, the young priest and the brothers made their way to the spot whereon the small hall of sacrifice had been erected. There they saw first Divodāsa himself and, later on, his queen solemnly conducted through the eastern door after they had had their hair cut, had bathed and anointed themselves with butter and unguents in their respective bathing huts to the north of the hall. The young Vasiṣṭhid gave them an account of what was going on inside. "There are," said he, "two fires within, the sacrificial fire near the eastern door and the household fire at the western end behind which sits the queen. The King, whose name I must not mention during this time, is on the south side of the first fire. The purohita places between him and the fire a black antelope skin. With his right knee bent, the King crawls forward on to this skin saying, 'Thou art protection; protect me; homage to thee; do me no harm.' Then he girds himself with the sacrificer's girdle, and ties the horn of a black antelope into a fold at the end of his robe. The priest next gives him a staff which he places on his right shoulder. Now with the point of the horn wrapped in his garment he has to dig up a clod of earth—that is to be done in order to ensure good crops. Meanwhile the assistant priest girds the queen with a cord and gives her a wooden peg. All rites connected with her are, of course, done in silence. Then Viśvāmitra kindles the

wood in the fire pot on the sacrificial fire and offers up the prescribed prayers invoking blessings. The fire is adored by them all with suitable stanzas and the King solemnly undertakes to perform the sacrifice."

At last, the voice of a priest was heard from within saying, "This brahman is initiated."

"Now," said Citraratha, "begins a severe fasting for the sacrificer and his queen; they will need those girdles to tighten their bellies when hunger assails them. This evening the priests will be singing elaborate stanzas in praise of the sacrificer and all the gods but we need not wait for that. The last day of this initiation business is the next interesting day for us. So we shall have some time to go on practising your riding and driving. Come along."

"What shall we see to-day," said Āyu, as they walked down to the sacrificial ground on the last of the dīkṣā days. "Why, the marking out of the large piece of consecrated ground and of the field of the fire at one end of it," replied Vasiṣṭha's son, "Look, they have begun already."

It was even so. Viśvāmitra and his assistants were busy stretching a rope round the boundaries of a curiously shaped four-sided area, the eastern line of which was a trifle shorter than the western boundary and both were somewhat shorter than the northern and southern sides. This rope passed round the four corner posts and on the outside of the two posts in the centre of the eastern and western lines respectively. Between these two latter posts a line was traced on the ground, marking, as it were, the spinal

cord of the mahāvedi. If this line had been prolonged westwards, it would have passed straight through the hall of sacrifice a few feet distant.

Having done this, Viśvāmitra's next care was to mark out the bird-shaped agnikṣetra or field of the fire. Just west of the central point in the eastern boundary, he marked out a square symbolising the bird's body and smaller squares north, south and west to form the two wings and the tail. Around this area a rope was stretched and many stones were pushed into the soil. Three of these stones, placed at the outer end of the western side of the small square that formed the left or northern wing of the bird, were remarkable. One was as high as a man's knee, the second as high as his middle, and the third as high as his mouth.

"That is all that we shall see to-day," said Citraratha, "we must come again to-morrow the first of the three days in which they pay homage to the gods."

"I am glad I am not a priest," exclaimed Āyu, "I should never remember all these details."

"Truly," said Vasiṣṭha's son, "a priest's life is a hard one. There are many that have no work to do except to go round cajoling folk to make sacrifices in order to earn a miserably small fee."

"But," replied Ojas, "when they do get a big job, they earn immense fees enough to feed all the priests in the tribe for a life-time!"

"Ah!" remarked the young priest, "if the lucky ones were generous, all would be well; but they are stingy and keep their fees for the benefit of their own families."

CHAPTER IX

Divodasa Offers a Soma Sacrifice

THE next day, the first of the upasad or homage days, the friends were once more present to see all that could be seen. The first thing they saw was Divodāsa and two priests going towards a ditch on the south-west of the sacrificial hall. On the edge of this ditch one of the priests placed three black stones, behind which he threw several objects. Then pouring water in front of the stones, he returned, followed by his companions, to the hall without any one of them casting a look behind him.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Ojas.

"Those black stones are the altar of Nirṛti, or Destruction," explained the young priest, "and the objects thrown away are those no longer required in the rites. This morning they have built a new household-fire altar of bricks at the eastern door of the hall. And whilst those priests there are digging up the mahāvedi Viśvāmitra is offering an oblation of grain and ghee, the first in the Soma sacrifice."

Shortly afterwards the purohita came out and, crossing the mahāvedi, took hold of the handle of a wooden plough to which twelve oxen had just been harnessed at the end of a long rope. He made sixteen furrows in the agnikṣetra, taking care that the oxen were kept outside the sacred area. Oxen and plough were then taken away to the north-east and the

ploughed surface was sprinkled with water and sown with grain. In the middle was laid a bunch of Kuśa grass over which a libation of ghee was poured with a stanza.

"Now," said Vasiṣṭha's son, "after the purchasing of the soma from that wretched mountaineer, the first layer of bricks for the high altar will be laid."

Looking on, they saw a priest place the hide of a red bull on the mahāvedi and put some soma stalks upon it. Meanwhile, the red cow, the purchase price of the soma, was brought to the door of the hall and made to take seven paces to the north. Around the seventh footprint Divodāsa, Viśvāmitra and two priests sat down. Viśvāmitra placed a piece of gold in this footprint and poured ghee upon it. With a wooden sword he made traces around it and taking up sand with the sword he placed it in a pot of ghee which he gave first to Divodāsa and then to the queen who all the while was gazing fixedly on the cow. After washing his hands and tying a piece of gold on his fourth finger, Viśvāmitra ordered them to bring the cloth on which the soma was to be laid and the latter's covering together with the strip of cloth that was to tie the bundle together.

They then proceeded to the soma which, after Divodāsa had touched it, was wrapped up in a bundle with a slight opening at the top. Viśvāmitra handed this bundle to the soma-seller and began to bargain with him. The seller, not seeming content with the red cow, was given a piece of gold. The purohita then placed the soma upon Divodāsa's right thigh as he

sat on the ground and offered up a prayer to the Gandharvas during which Divodāsa and his wife uncovered their heads. The soma-seller still haggled for more but had the piece of gold snatched away from his hand and was driven off with blows from a speckled wand. The young priest explained, however, that this was merely part of the ritual and that the man received his price afterwards.

Divodāsa, rising from the ground, placed the soma bundle on his head and took it to the cart near by, upon which a black antelope skin had been stretched. Viśvāmitra laid the soma upon it and covered it up. Two oxen were yoked to the cart which was then set in motion a few paces towards the east. Turning to the right, they led the cart slowly towards the sacrificial hall. During this journey melodious stanzas were recited.

As the cart drew near to the door, Viśvāmitra recited a stanza inviting Indra, the Gods and the Brahmans to be present at the forthcoming sacrifice. At the door four priests were waiting with a seat made of udumbara wood and covered with the skin of a black antelope. On to this the soma was solemnly put and taken within to be installed upon its throne south of the sacrificial fire altar.

"Now," said Vasiṣṭha's son, "they will give God Soma a royal welcome with prayers and offerings and Divodāsa enters into a covenant with the priests and they with him not to hurt or harm one another. Divodāsa and his queen will put kindling wood on their respective fire altars, will wash their hands,

tighten their girdles and clench their fists. This is the beginning of their intermediate consecration."

"I wish I could go inside," said Āyu, "I should like to see exactly what they do."

"Oh," remarked Ojas, "they go on and on repeating the same actions."

"Not quite the same," said the young priest, "though to the ordinary man they may seem to be so."

"What are they doing now?" asked Āyu.

"Oh, they are asking the soma to swell. They wash their hands, put gold on their ring-fingers, touch the soma and say, 'Stalk by stalk, God Soma, do thou swell for Indra, for Indra who gainest the chiefest wealth.'"

Whilst this conversation was going on, Viśvāmitra, with his wooden sword, had scraped up four clods of earth from outside the sacred area and then had placed them at certain points in the agnikṣetra. His assistants constructed the high altar on a bundle of Kuśa grass, and covered it and the part immediately around it with sand several inches deep.

"That's the uttaravedi," said Citraratha to Āyu. "They will build it up with bricks layer by layer, during the next two days, with all sorts of ceremonies. We need not watch them,—it is a tedious business. You know, I suppose, that the bricks are made of the clay taken from the tank in which the bodies of the sacrificial victims have been soaking. Their heads are built in with the first layer. I will bring you down on the fire-carrying day. Let us depart."

On the last upasad or homage day, Citraratha and his companions arrived in time to see the solemn carrying of a flaming brand by Viśvāmitra from the hall of sacrifice to the high altar. Divodāsa and the assistant priests went with him. They halted about halfway whilst Viśvāmitra placed a small round spotted stone on the ground. Their recitations could not be heard but the various libations, the putting on of kindling wood, were clearly seen as well as the offering of sacrificial cakes to Agni and the Maruts. Then followed a great many libations and offerings with mantras. Divodāsa at length moved across to the north side of the tail of the agnikṣetra and sat down on the antelope skin they had stretched for him. Here Viśvāmitra solemnly anointed him. More libations followed.

Āyu's attention had wandered during these tedious rites but he regained his interest in the proceedings when Viśvāmitra and another brought on to the mahāvedi two carts near the hall of sacrifice one on either side of the centre line. Coverings were put over them. Going then to the door near which the new household-fire altar had been built, Viśvāmitra offered a libation in it and then poured one on the outside track of the right-hand cart whilst the queen put grease on the axle. Meanwhile, his assistant poured a libation on the left wheel track of the left-hand cart and the queen came and greased its axle also.

The carts were drawn across the mahāvedi and brought to a stand just a few yards from the agnikṣetra.

A shed was then erected over them with due ceremonial. It was left open at its eastern and western entrances but its sides were enclosed by wattled hurdles. Four sounding-holes were dug in the ground beneath the shafts of the right-hand cart. These were sprinkled and covered with Kuśa grass on the top of which two planks were laid. On the top of those again a red ox-hide was placed to receive the five pressing-stones later on. The spectators had seen these things being carried in and the young priest explained what was done with them.

"The next business," said he, "is the building of the small fire altars for each of the priests and their sheds. One over there in the centre of the northern boundary and half inside, half outside, of the line is for the fire-priest, the āgnīdhra. Facing it on the south boundary line will be built the altar of purification whose light also drives the Rakṣases away. And near the western boundary close to the sacrificial hall will be the shed for all the priests with their altars inside. The centre pole is of the same height as Divodāsa and the round matted roof will slope down to the middle point of his stature. Viśvāmitra will then address all these places with holy mantras and order the bringing of the water, the faggots, and all other things necessary for the animal sacrifice."

Silently then they watched these operations which took some little time but their patience was rewarded by the solemn procession of Agni and Soma, the next affair of importance. Headed by Viśvāmitra and the priests carrying a lighted brand, the soma plants, the

soma cups, the pressing-stones and sacred utensils, Divodāsa, his queen and his near kinsmen walked in solemn procession across the mahāvedi from the hall towards the āgnīdhra's shelter. Divodāsa and his queen both showed signs of having endured a severe fast.

Arrived at their destination, they placed the brand on the altar therein and deposited the various objects. Thereupon the procession moved over to the high altar upon which Viśvāmitra poured a libation with a stanza. After that the Soma was brought into the hut of the oblation carts and deposited on the black antelope skin laid upon the right-hand cart. Leaving the hut, Divodāsa opened his clenched fists as a sign that his consecration was over and his long fasting.

Both before and after this solemn procession the priests strewed the mahāvedi with sacred grass and continued their preparations for the animal sacrifice, amongst other things by erecting with solemn ritual the sacrificial posts along and just beyond the eastern boundary line.

When all was ready, the victims were brought forward, were sprinkled with water and anointed. A flaming brand was carried thrice around them and then they were led away outside the sacred area to the immolation pit near the north-east corner. Here, whilst the priests turned their backs, they were noiselessly strangled. Their omenta were then cut out and offered up and then Divodāsa, his wife and the priests went to the water pit to purify themselves.

"Now," said Vasiṣṭha's son, "will follow another procession, that of the running waters to be used in the soma pressing to-morrow. Divodāsa will keep a solemn vigil over them in the āgnīdhra's hut and the queen will keep vigil in the hall. After sunset, the flesh of the victims will be cooked and the cake of sacrifice will be offered. The cooked meat will then be eaten and the singers will chant the praises of Divodāsa and the gods."

"Let us not wait any longer," said Citraratha, "I am hungry. Let us go home."

The next day, the day of the actual Soma sacrifice itself, Āyu went off very early with Vasiṣṭha's son but Ojas stayed with Citraratha to help him in the schooling of a pair of young horses that had never yet been harnessed to a chariot. Citraratha declared that, there being very little for mere spectators to see in a soma sacrifice, he would not come before noon.

The first thing then that Ojas and Citraratha saw was a procession of Divodāsa and the priests to the various small altars in front of which they stood murmuring stanzas. Passing through the crowd Ojas found his brother and said:

"Well, Āyu, what have you seen and heard thus far?"

"Not very much," admitted Āyu, "I heard the Hotṛ reciting endless stanzas and saw the priests taking things into the soma-cart shed. Then I saw a procession going forth to fetch the water for the pressing and for ablution. I heard the stone beating out the juice for the first offering that Viśvāmitra

poured on the altar over there. He then returned to the cart shed and I heard more noise. Vasiṣṭha's son told me how they sat round the ox-hide placed over the two planks inside the shed, put soma stalks on it and beat them with the pressing stones. The juice was then taken up into a goblet and poured out through a woollen cloth that priests were holding over a vat whilst Divodāsa at the same time poured water on it. Ever so many times we saw Viśvāmitra coming out with different cups and pouring libations on the altar. At last they all came out with Viśvāmitra leading and the King coming last; each of them was holding the garment of the one in front of him. Viśvāmitra poured out another libation. Vasiṣṭha's son told me that this was an offering of expiation to the drops of soma that might have been accidentally spilled. Then they all went to that north-east corner and listened to some chanting. The fire-priest went round with burning brands and lit up the fires on the small altars. Then they went through the animal sacrifice, the victims being three he-goats and a ram. All this was similar to what we saw the other day. After the purification they all went and saluted the small altars and poured more libations. Then inside the priests' hut they sat down and drank some of the soma."

"Ah," exclaimed Ojas, "they deserved it after all that business."

Citraratha, who had been talking to some friends, now joined them and they sat patiently through the pressing and libation-offering ceremonies that took

place at mid-day, all as before except that, as the young priest explained, different chants and recitations were used. He wanted to describe the various metres used but the others objected that, not being priests, they were not interested.

At last, when Viśvāmitra proceeded to offer a libation on the altar at the door of the hall and on the altar of the fire-priest, there was a general murmur of interest amongst the spectators. For these libations introduced the giving of the dakṣiṇā or fees to the priests, each of whom was to receive his prescribed share. A very large herd of cows was driven up past the door of the hall and then across to the front of the fire-priest's shelter and over the northern boundary where they were received and taken away by the priests' servants. Viśvāmitra received in addition the team of twelve oxen he had used in the ploughing.

Citraratha, assuring his young friends that there was nothing else for them to see that was new, took them away with him. Āyu, however, learnt afterwards from the young priest that throughout the night the high altar fire was fed continuously, whilst the chants and recitations were kept up with short intervals till the dawn. Much drinking of the soma, fermented by means of admixture of milk, went on. In the morning they took in procession everything that had been used for the sacrifice and threw into the ditch near the north-east boundary the sacrificial girdles, the antelope horn and the wooden peg. After that Divodāsa, his queen and the priests went with chanting to the tank wherein they bathed. Into the

water all objects that had come into contact with the soma were thrown. The procession then returned to the mahāvedi and recited the stanza:

"We have drunk the Soma; we have become immortal, we have entered into light, we have found the gods. What can an enemy now do to us or what can the malice of any mortal effect?"

"After this," said Vasiṣṭha's son, "they sacrificed a sterile cow to Mitra and Varuṇa. Finally they offered a cake to Agni and offerings to the divine impellers. After the singers had chanted the praises of Divodāsa and of Prajāpati, fire was put to the sacred grass on the mahāvedi and everyone departed."

CHAPTER X

Śambara Tries His Luck

CONFIDENT now of aid from Indra, the soma-loving god of battle, Divodāsa set out with the warriors of the Tṛtsu clan on his march to the hills of the north-east where Śambara had his strongholds. He was joined on his way by contingents from every grāma of the Bharata tribe summoned to service by the war-drum. Half the able-bodied men, however, were left behind to guard their homes against possible foes, Āryan or Dasyu. As the army marched in loose and scattered array through the lands of the Pūrus on the upper waters of the Sarasvatī, Divodāsa summoned his lately defeated foes to join him. They were not unwilling to obey because Śambara, being no longer on friendly terms with them, had begun to raid their settlements and drive off their cattle.

Soon the Āryans arrived at the edge of the foothills where, on account of the denser jungle, they could not use their war-chariots. Sudās and the nobles of the clans who excelled in this way of fighting persuaded Divodāsa to attempt to lure Śambara down to the more open country. They knew that his scouts were lurking around watching their movements, for Śambara was no novice in the art of war.

The ruse they adopted was a sham breach of friendship between the Bharatas and the Pūrus. The Āryan host had been divided into three parts, the Pūrus forming the third. Divodāsa and his son were

in command of the other two. Each part was, as usual, composed of clans under their viśpatis, and each clan was made up of contingents from the separate villages under their grāmaṇis. This organization of the host according to family and kindred was found to be the best for the maintaining of discipline and zeal. The individual fought not so much for his own glory as for that of his family and his clan. Between the families and the clans there sprang up an honourable rivalry but this was not always an advantage to the leader of the host who sometimes found his plans spoilt by the too great zeal of one or more sections.

It was at a council of war between the clan leaders that the pretended breach of friendship between the tribes took place. Kutsa the Pūru leader left the council with his officers in apparent anger and withdrew his division as if to return home.

It was thought necessary for the success of the ruse that the real state of affairs should be known only to a few. Consequently there was much angry talk amongst the Bharatas concerning this defection. Ojas and Āyu, who were chatting with their old friends Lopāśa and his comrades when the Pūrus moved away, were loud in their scornful remarks. "Are they afraid of the black-skinned mountain goats?" exclaimed Ojas, "or are they traitors in league with the shameless mocker?"

None could answer him. Lopāśa, however, suggested that after their recent defeat they were sensitive and quick to take offence at some fancied slight.

"Whatever the cause of it," said Āyu, "their desertion will bring Śambara upon us."

"Ah!" cried the quick-witted Lopāśa, "perhaps it is all pretence and a trick to bring Śambara down into the open country."

"Of course," exclaimed Ojas recollecting a casual remark let fall by Citraratha, "that's it. It is a trick and I hope it will succeed. But supposing he comes by night, our chariots will not be of any use."

"No fear of that," replied Lopāśa, "The wretches are too much afraid of the demons of darkness."

However, when Śambara heard the news two days later, he determined to attack by night, hoping thereby to fight on more equal terms. He would do his utmost to damage as many chariots and horses as possible by a surprise attack. He would draw the attention of the Āryans by a determined onslaught at one point and send in a few picked men at the opposite corner to steal up in the darkness and hamstring the horses and set fire to the chariots. If they could not get near enough to do these things, at least they could shoot volleys of arrows into the animals.

Śambara knew the habits of the Āryans for he had had many encounters with Divodāsa before this. He knew that the horses and chariots would be grouped together in the middle of the camp. Nor would it be difficult to locate them for, on hearing the noise of battle, the horses would stamp and neigh. His captains approved of these tactics and, to overcome the reluctance of their men to moving in the dark,

ordered the tribal priests to make many incantations to propitiate the demons of the night.

Though the Āryans did not expect an attack by night, nevertheless they did not neglect the usual precautions. Along the eastern side of their bivouac ran a small stream; beyond this and around the other three sides watch-fires at short intervals were placed, each under a strong guard. These outposts were held by different bands each night. The horses and chariots were grouped in the very centre of the camp in a square, the steeds being placed behind the chariots between which enough space was left for the drivers to bring up the teams and yoke them to the poles, if it were necessary. Around the four sides the warriors in their respective groupings slept on the ground with weapons close beside them.

Divodāsa was becoming impatient. For several days there had been no signs that their ruse was having the desired effect. Then Kutsa the Pūru leader sent word that his scouts had reported a gathering of the foe amongst the hills. He began to move slowly back again so as to be within reach of his allies and have a share of the fighting.

The word was passed round that Śambara was coming and the Āryans looked forward to marching out to battle, for they were beginning to be tired of sitting still. "To-morrow," they joyfully told one another, "we shall see how great a champion our Indra is."

But they had need of him before the morrow. Śambara had moved round to the north-west and in

the darkest hour of the night, just before dawn, he launched his attack most formidably. Thousands of his men had come up within striking distance moving noiselessly with the skill of long practice. With a sudden outburst of drumming and of their fierce barbaric war-cries they overwhelmed the Āryan outposts on the western side. The host of sleeping warriors at scarcely three bowshots' distance sprang to their feet, seized their weapons and rushed towards the danger spot but their leaders, raising their voices above the din, restrained them from leaving the camp. Standing together awaiting the assault they were the less likely to mistake friend for foe in the darkness.

Meanwhile the other outposts had retired to the camp where they found all the various sections guarding their own quarters. No one could say whether the Dasyus had surrounded them or not. It was advisable to wait and see if attacks came from any other side.

To the chagrin of Ojas, Prince Sudās sent him and most of the personal bodyguard to keep watch over the chariots in the middle of the camp. Sudās had noticed that the enemy had not pressed home the attack on the western side in spite of their drummings and war-cries. He guessed that the real danger lay elsewhere.

Finding that the Āryans were not rushing out from their camp to the rescue of their unfortunate comrades, Śambara ordered the signal for retreat to be sounded on the drums. The Dasyus melted away like mist before the sun. The Āryans were deceived by

the sudden stillness and carrying lighted torches, went in search of the wounded men of the outposts, if by chance any were left.

Here was Śambara's opportunity. The torches betrayed the exact positions of the Āryans. He threw his men upon them again, shooting volleys of arrows that killed and wounded many and caused the rest to dash forward with angry cries. For a brief space of time there was a fierce hand-to-hand fight. The shouting was tremendous for it was only by their cries that the fighters could distinguish between friend and foe. Even so some mishaps occurred. The Dasyus were cleverer than the Āryans in that they responded to the various signals from their drums and so helped their leaders to lure the Āryans further and further from their camp.

Whilst this confused fighting was going on at the western side, the Āryans on the farther side of the camp, not being attacked and seeing no signs of an enemy, grew restless. Amongst them was the contingent under the grāmaṇī Vyoman with the boastful and ambitious Dvaita at his side, chafing at his leader's order to remain where he was lest the Dasyus should attack on this quarter. Ojas and Āyu and others of Sudās' retinue under Citraratha were no less irked by inaction. They could not understand what possible danger could come to the horses and chariots which they had been told to guard. The fighting was all in one quarter and was growing more distant. It would all be over soon and they had not had a chance to strike a blow.

"I care not," shouted Dvaita, "I go; who follows?"

"Lead on," was the reply from many throats.

So, shouting as he went, Dvaita led almost all the men under Vyoman's command in a wild rush through the camp.

"That is Dvaita's voice," whispered Āyu, "he has left his post."

"I am minded to follow him," exclaimed Ojas impatiently.

"Stay where you are, Ojas," cried Citraratha, "we shall be needed here; hark! they come."

A startled cry here and there, the sound of blows and curses at the eastern edge of the camp, came to their ears. Śambara's picked men who had crept up unheard and unseen on the other side of the stream had seized their chance and burst in through the gap left by Dvaita. Vyoman and a faithful few who had remained with him, Lopāśa and his comrades being amongst them, fought valiantly and slew several, but the other Dasyus stayed not to fight. Their object was to destroy the horses and damage the chariots, after which they hoped to escape in the darkness.

"Indra, ho Indra!" shouted Citraratha as he led his band forward. Sections of those posted round the camp came dashing inwards to join him, guided by his constant shouts. But the Dasyu leader giving a long peculiar whistle drew his men aside to find his way round the advancing Āryan line if possible. When he found no one in front of him Citraratha, fearing

the worst, wheeled round and shouted, "back to the chariots".

. The enemy had begun to shoot their arrows. The twanging of the bow strings could be heard to the right and the thud of some arrows against the woodwork of the chariots and now and then the squeal of a horse in pain. The Āryans rushed towards the twanging noise and ran full tilt into the bowmen who were felled to the ground. Then Ojas, remembering the strange whistling sound, imitated it and had the satisfaction of hearing a rush of small active figures uttering low words in their strange tongue coming towards him.

Too late they realized their mistake for which very many paid with their lives. The first flush of dawn was now lighting the sky. The heavenly Aśvins were coming to their aid. Moving in a compact body, the Āryans, now swollen to a goodly number, put to flight all those who lived to escape.

This episode had in reality taken a very short time. Not much damage had been done to the horses thanks to Ojas' clever trick on which he was warmly congratulated by Citraratha who realized how nearly the enemy had succeeded in their purpose.

"That fool Dvaita's fault," said Ojas to his brother, "letting in the foe like that! We shall not forget it."

CHAPTER XI

Experience Dearly Bought

As soon as it was day, Divodāsa ordered the chariots, under the leadership of his son, to move out in pursuit of the foe, whilst he, after looking to the burial of the dead, would strike camp and follow as rapidly as possible.

Two abreast, therefore, with Sudās leading, the chariots dashed out of the camp. A few miles away Sudās espied little clouds of dust in a long irregular line across his front raised by the swiftly fleeing Dasyus. The wily Śambara had ordered his men to scatter into small parties and to make their way as fast as they could to the friendly shelter of their hilly jungles. He was not going to offer a big target at any one point to the dreaded chariot fighters.

"Ho, Citraratha," exclaimed Sudās, "Śambara is no fool. Rein up and let me give my commands."

The chariots gathered around him, the horses glad of a breathing space as they champed their bits. Sudās then ordered the drivers to spread out in a line and drive into the scattered groups of Dasyus and whoever could find out Śambara's whereabouts was to dash across to the right wing, whither he was going to lead half a dozen chariots, and inform him. For he desired himself to kill or capture the enemy leader.

Once more, the steeds were put to the gallop as the Āryans spread themselves out into a long line. Sudās and six of his nearest kinsmen kept together as they

went forward to the wing. In this group the two brothers Ojas and Āyu, acting as charioteers, found themselves. They had need of all their newly-acquired skill in the art of driving for the ground was very bumpy and full of obstacles. The Dasyus, naturally enough, had chosen such ground as much as they could.

The body of Dasyus which they were about to attack scattered into smaller groups, some of which, hiding in small ditches or behind stunted bushes, made ready their bows and arrows.

Sudās was in the centre of the attackers with three chariots to his left and on his right Āyu, then Ojas and another, all in extended order to allow room for their usual manœuvres. Heedless of the flying arrows that, fortunately for the Āryans, either passed overhead on account of the great speed of the attack or else struck harmlessly into the front or side boards, the charioteers drove straight ahead. When at close range they wheeled to the right so as to enable the fighters to shoot their arrows as fast as they could pick them out from the quivers fastened to the front rail. Then, with another sharp wheeling to the right, they drove rapidly out of range before completing the circle in preparation for the next demoralising attack.

The success of this manœuvre depended largely on the nature of the ground and the skill and luck of the drivers. Āyu and Ojas were unlucky; they found themselves driving into a space with bushes on one side and a ditch on the other. Behind the bushes and in the ditch stood resolute Dasyu bowmen. The only

course for the brothers was to gallop through straight-forward at a few Dasyus in front of them until they came on to better ground.

The arrows from the front did no harm but those from the flanks proved deadly. The Rājanya in Āyu's chariot fell pierced by an arrow through his eye and the left-hand horse stumbled and staggered with one shot into his flank at close range from a bush. The chariot swung round.

An exultant Dasyu had sprung out, with spear upraised for a thrust at the frantic Āyu, but the pole of the chariot caught him full in the mouth and knocked him senseless. Bringing the chariot to a stand, Āyu leaped down, ran forward to the fallen man and, taking from him his bow and quiver, prepared to sell his life dearly. Even as he was bending over his foe, an arrow whistled past his head and struck into the Dasyu's body. Āyu, therefore, crawled hastily back to the shelter of the chariot but the right-hand horse started kicking and plunging and, as the chariot threatened to crush him, he had to roll himself out of its way. Some Dasyus near by came running out with spears and Āyu called aloud on Indra to save him. A spear was thrown and narrowly missed him.

Suddenly the Dasyus turned to run for shelter again for Citraratha, in driving forward for the second attack, had caught sight of them and was bearing down upon them. "Cut the horse loose," shouted Citraratha to Āyu, "and jump on his back."

This was more easily said than done. However Āyu did accomplish it. He adjusted the reins to the

bit in the horse's mouth, picked up the spear and sprang upon the animal's bare back.

To his astonishment, he saw another horseman. It was his brother Ojas who with fierce cries was riding down upon the Dasyu bowmen in the ditch and would certainly have come to grief against so many had not Āyu created a diversion on the other side and had not the chariot on the extreme wing also dashed to his rescue. With many arrows the intrepid Dasyu archers were put out of action but not before Āyu's horse was killed under him and fell, pinning its rider to the ground.

Ojas rode his horse across the ditch, jumped down and, exerting all his strength, lifted the fallen animal off his brother's inert body. Hoisting him across his own horse, Ojas leapt up behind him and carried him to the rear.

Several other chariots along the line had suffered disaster in various ways. The Dasyus far in front were showing signs of coming back but a cloud of dust on the right flank made them change their minds and in a short while Kutsa and the Pūru chariots hove in sight.

They took up the pursuit but soon found the ground too broken and had to return. They regretted that they had not come earlier.

With horses spent and exhausted the Āryan chariots slowly returned to the spot where Sudās had set up his banner. Their dead comrades were gathered up and placed in a row to be buried when Divodāsa and the foot-soldiers should arrive.

Ojas and Citraratha were bending over Āyu who, to their joy, was beginning to recover. Opening his eyes, he looked bewilderedly around him muttering incoherent words.

"Rouse yourself, Āyu," said Ojas, "the fight is over and you are safe, but we would know if your limbs are injured." Āyu sat up, shook himself and then, with Ojas' help, rose to his feet and took a few steps.

"No," said he, "I am not hurt beyond a bruise or two, but shall I ever be allowed to drive a chariot again?"

"Or I either?" said his brother, "we both came badly to grief."

"Have no fear," replied Citraratha, "even the best of us can do naught when the horses are killed and but few would have ridden bareback upon the foe so resolutely as ye twain did. Your Prince commends you for your resourceful courage."

"Tell me, brother," said Āyu, "how it came about that you too were on a horse? I was astonished to see you thus."

"Why, Āyu, I had an experience very similar to yours. My warrior was shot down and my right-hand horse disabled, as I was passing down the outer side of that ditch, after I had wheeled round. The Dasyus were about to spring out upon me from their ditch but I was too quick for them. I unharnessed the other horse with considerable difficulty for the arrows were whistling through the air and he was rearing. Then I vaulted upon his back. No sooner had I done

this than the brave creature bore me straight at my foes with outstretched neck and open mouth to bite them. 'Tis he, rather than I, who should be commended for courage."

"Ah," remarked Citraratha, "I am glad he did that. I have been trying to teach my horses that accomplishment."

CHAPTER XII

A Sacrifice Goes Awry

WHEN the Āryan host came up to the chariot-fighters, their dead kinsmen were buried with a few simple rites and Viśvāmitra, the purohit, recited a dirge over them but the Dasyu dead were left to the vultures and the jackals.

On learning from Prince Sudās that Śambara had not been seen, Divodāsa said that he had evidently hastened ahead to make ready his strong forts, which they must attack without delay. The chariots would be useless in the hilly regions and must be left behind strongly guarded within a stockade.

Ojas and Āyu, having much to relate to their friends, went in search of Lopāśa. They were dismayed to learn from his comrades that Lopāśa was missing. Neither among the living nor the dead was he to be found. They feared that he had dashed out too rashly in pursuit of the Dasyus and had been captured and carried away to torture and death. The two brothers, sad at heart, vowed vengeance, for both had begun to hope that he might one day wed their sister Ghoṣā.

Divodāsa led his tribesmen and their allies the Pūrus into the hills. In an open valley he caused an intrenched and stockaded encampment to be made for the chariots and horses and left them under a strong guard commanded by Citraratha. A stream ran through this camp and, except for the small trees

along its banks, the forest that clothed the hillsides had not spread itself into the valley. Consequently the enemy could neither approach unseen nor drive out the Āryans by setting the forest on fire. The most they could do was to divert the stream.

Ojas and Āyu accompanied their Prince on foot and, except for a few skirmishes here and there, the Āryans at first met with little opposition. To the Pūrus was assigned the task of scouting ahead of the main body. They discovered a cunning ambush prepared by the wily Śambara and so enabled Divodāsa to turn a possible disaster into a decisive victory.

For the Āryans there now followed a difficult and laborious task. Almost every hilltop was crowned with a fortified stockade surrounded by ditches and earthen ramparts. Each one had to be approached cautiously for the Dasyus had often prepared traps for the unwary especially on the easier slopes of the ascent. One of their favourite devices was a concealed sunken pit with sharpened stakes fixed upright at the bottom: another trap was worked with boulders that were plentiful on the sides of the dry beds of the mountain torrents. As it was often easiest for the climbers to move along these beds instead of hacking their way through the entangled undergrowth of the jungle, the Āryans had at first chosen the easier route. Several of the attacking parties moving up in the faint light of dawn had found trees lying across the stream beds and had, naturally enough, tugged these aside. In so doing they had let loose a mass of

boulders that had been cunningly balanced on an overhanging bank and held in place by a log one end of which was attached to the obstacles in the stream bed. After their first few lessons in the tricks of their mountain foemen, the Āryans learnt caution and no longer attempted to storm these heights pell-mell. 'Once bitten,' they were 'twice shy'.

Some of these hilltop forts were found to be deserted; a few, weakly garrisoned, fell immediately to a direct assault but most offered a stubborn resistance. Their defenders made valiant sorties against the besiegers who were also harassed by bands of Dasyus appearing and disappearing as if by magic. The hills and jungles were their home and, in spite of the scouting abilities of the Pūrus, these skilful mountaineers often slipped by them and caused loss to the Āryans, especially by cutting off stragglers or small detached parties.

One by one, however, sooner or later, these stubbornly defended strongholds fell before the sturdy Āryans and their defenders were either put to the sword or enslaved. The unhappy captives roped together were marched down to the chariot camp to be distributed, later on, amongst the clans as their share of booty. Agni, in whose worship Divodāsa was particularly zealous, invoked in many a stirring chant by Viśvāmitra, the King's purohit, showed himself graciously favourable to their cause. In fact the Āryans found fire to be their most potent weapon. They piled the brushwood in masses against the wooden stockades and burnt their way in. Agni

Daivodāsa, endowed with strength, like a red bull, burnt up the foes of his true worshippers.

But still the elusive Śambara himself evaded capture. Further and further into the mountains he led them for he was lord of many clans and had many a stronghold left. In spite of the exhortations of Viśvāmitra, the Bharatas were beginning to suffer from fatigue and the great cold of the higher regions. Divodāsa himself was smitten down with a fever and resigned the command to his son advising him to capture the very large pur on the hill at whose base they now found themselves. "Surely," he said, "that must be Śambara's own abode. If we can capture him, it is well but, if not, we must nevertheless cease our fighting and return home. We shall have punished him enough for his shameless mockery."

Sudās, resolving to capture the fort without loss of time, sent out his scouting parties far and wide in order to make sure that no considerable bands of the Dasyus were lurking about waiting to draw off his attention from the main attack. He was beginning to be suspicious of the good faith and friendship of Kutsa the Pūru leader who, he thought, was jealous of his appointment to the command of the Āryan host. He feared lest the Pūrus might send in misleading reports and so cause him serious trouble. To prevent the possibility of this, he detached some of the Bharata warriors to accompany the Pūrus in their scouting. Ojas and Āyu, to whom the Prince confided his mistrust, were ordered to join one such party under the grāmaṇī Vyoman to search the jungles far out on the west.

Vyoman sent out his men in twos and threes, telling them to keep in touch with one another, to move cautiously and avoid fighting. At night they were to bivouac wherever they found themselves, ready at dawn to move on towards the west; on the fourth morning they were to return towards their starting point, unless they had any report to make before that.

The brothers and two of Lopāśa's cousins were together in one party. Keeping in touch with their neighbours on both sides of them was not easy and so their progress during the three days was slow. However, they had seen no signs of their enemies and consequently, on the third night, they slept more soundly, even the man on watch allowing himself to doze.

During his turn to keep guard, Ojas suddenly became aware of a faint rhythmical noise. He bent over his sleeping companions wondering if any of them was snoring. Each was breathing quietly. Ojas listened more intently; the throbbing noise was now more definite and clearly distinguishable from the usual night-time sounds of the jungle. He awakened his companions and bade them listen.

"Drums," said Āyu, "over in that direction," and he pointed forwards.

"Yes, drum-music it is," rejoined one of Lopāśa's cousins, "the Dasyus are up to some devilry. There must be many of them together if they meet by night, for they are terribly frightened of the dark."

"Up with you all," exclaimed Ojas, "we must go ahead and see what it means."

Making their way silently and swiftly through the jungle, the young men walked towards the sound. After one hour, they had almost reached the spot whence it came. Moving forward with great caution, they soon found themselves looking down upon a scene such as none of them had ever witnessed before. Below them the ground, cleared of trees except for two giants in the middle, formed a kind of bowl of wide extent as they soon discovered for, between the two trees a small fire was burning, into which dark figures were casting faggots, and the flames, every little while leaping up, showed many dark motionless forms sitting in a wide circle.

Between those dark forms and the fire, in and out of the shadows, men were dancing in a circle round the flames, keeping time with the drums that were being played by unseen hands in the crowd. Now fast, now slow, sometimes leaping with raucous shouts, sometimes swaying their bodies backwards and forwards as, with faces turned towards the fire, they shuffled slowly round it, the dancers went on unceasingly.

When Ojas saw men slinging up a pole between the trees and over the fire, he suddenly realized what was happening. "Puruṣamedha," he whispered to his comrades, "some unlucky man is about to be sacrificed."

There was a stir in the crowd beneath them. Through the circle of the dancing figures, now leaping and gesticulating wildly, a couple of men led forward by a long leather thong attached to his neck a man, naked to the waist, whose arms were bound behind his back and whose legs moved with short jerky steps. The

drumming grew louder, the weird chantings and howlings of the dancers filled the air.

This was fortunate for, otherwise, the loud shout that Ojas involuntarily gave would have been heard. "By all the gods," he shouted, "'Tis Lopāśa. Quick, comrades, think what to do. Act we must and that instantly."

"No use charging into this swarm of Dasyu devils," said one of the cousins, "we must somehow first terrify them out of their wits. So let us separate, climb into trees, shoot arrows at the priests and then burst out into melancholy howlings and wailings. Let them think the demons are upon them. Be careful not to waste your arrows; we have not too many of them."

Approving of this plan, they separated, climbed up trees and made ready their bows and arrows. With fascinated eyes, each watched the scene below him admiring the undaunted bearing of Lopāśa as he was led round the sacrificial fire. They were astonished at his calm courage.

As the third round was beginning two priests drew near with thongs. The crowd of hitherto silent spectators now joined in the chantings of the dancers, wildly and exultantly invoking their great Snake-God. A few moments more and the sacrifice would be accomplished turning the wrath of their deity into favour. For were they not offering him a rare victim, no less than a white-skinned Āryan without spot or blemish in his well-nourished youthful body?

When the third round was completed, the victim was made to halt and the priests advanced to bind

him to the pole above the fire. The dancers stood still, the great crowd was hushed into silence, the drums alone kept up their monotonous throbbings. Lopāśa lifted up his eyes and called aloud, "Farewell, Little Flower of the Forest, never shall I be husband of thine unless Indra succours me in this dark hour. Indra, ho! Indra, come now to my aid."

The priests mocked at him but, ere they could touch him, they fell to the ground each pierced by two arrows that seemed to come from the sky itself. The men holding the leather thong attached to Lopāśa's neck, in their rage at this apparent intervention of the hated Āryan god, began to pull in order to throttle their victim. Lopāśa gave a gasping choke and thought his end had indeed come but lo! Indra's arrows again whistled through the air and his tormentors fell dead.

Consternation and dismay fell upon the Dasyus whose fear was turned into panic by demoniac howlings and wailings coming, as it seemed to them, from all quarters of the heavens. With cries of terror they rushed forth into the forest and were swallowed up in its black depths. Lopāśa alone remained with the firelight dancing and gleaming on his white skin. He was amazed at the swift response of Indra to his call. He heard his name called from different sides; he was too astonished to reply.

Into the light of the fire rushed his rescuers. Each one embraced him vehemently. Then they cut his thongs, seized the clothing off the dead priests and wrapped him in it. Then at last did Lopāśa find his

voice. "Friends," he said, "thanks to you, I am still alive and their Snake-God goes without his food."

"We came up in the nick of time, Lopāśa, brother-in-law to be!" "Yes," said Ojas laughingly, "we heard you! and we rejoice exceedingly that Indra, your protector, guided us. Come now, let us hasten back and report our glad news, and, whilst we go, you shall tell us your story and we shall explain how we chanced to be in this region."

Lopāśa then described how unwisely he had dashed out after the Dasyus in the night attack, how he had stumbled and fallen, how he had been set upon by many Dasyus who bound his limbs and carried him off. "But," said he, "to my astonishment, I found myself well-cared for, well-fed and spared all torture or fatigue. I know now why I was so treated. The Snake-God's victim must be sound in mind and limb. They were propitiating him to save their big pur. Now that the sacrifice has gone awry, they will clear out from that place and go further into the mountains."

"Divodāsa is ill with fever," Ojas told him, "and after this pur has been captured and burnt, it is our Prince's intention, I believe, to break off operations and return home."

"We are glad to hear that," exclaimed Lopāśa's cousins, "we have had enough of chasing after this mountain goat Śambara."

CHAPTER XIII

Dvaita's Outburst

THE utter failure of their sacrifice terrified the Dasyus so much that Śambara determined to abandon his stronghold though it was the best of all his forts and the one in which he stored his more valuable possessions. When the scouting parties returned to the hill, they found the fort in flames, fired by Śambara himself just before he burst out with his followers to cut their way through their enemies. In spite of heavy losses, Śambara once again succeeded in escaping from the clutches of the Āryans.

In obedience to his father's instructions, Prince Sudās did not pursue him but ordered a general retirement. This was carried out without loss because the Dasyus, having failed so obviously to gain the favour of their god, did not dare to fight any more. Divodāsa, still suffering from a violent fever, was borne along in a litter down to the chariot camp. Thence he was taken swiftly home to be nursed back to health by his devoted wife with spells and incantations, and with earnest invocation of the twin Aśvins, the Wondrous, the True, the Divine Physicians, bringing bounty to the pious mortal as they whirl along in their chariot.

Shortly after their return to their royal master's village, Ojas and Āyu obtained Sudās' permission to visit their friends. The vision of the fair Apālā was never absent for long from the elder brother's mind. On their way to Lopāśa's house they could pass

through the Three-Tree village and discover whether the grāmaṇī was still desirous to have Dvaita as his son-in-law after the way in which he had disobeyed orders during Śambara's night attack. They could then, if necessary, help Apālā's aunt in removing the damsel to another place and in keeping Dvaita off.

Āyu fell in readily with his brother's plans. He was quite eager for more adventure in outwitting the arrogant boaster Dvaita. Now that he and his brother were known to belong to Prince Sudās' retinue, Dvaita would find it necessary to adopt more subtle measures against them and Āyu was curious to see how he would set to work. He had a high opinion of Lopāśa's abilities and urged his brother to take him into his confidence. But Ojas said he would wait and see about doing that.

One bright morning then, the two young men rode to the Three-Tree village and paid their respects to Vyoman who received them courteously and enquired after Divodāsa's health. He was relieved to hear that they were merely passing through his village on their way to visit Lopāśa. For, though he liked them well enough, he knew how they had treated Dvaita and he did not wish to have a disturbance, perhaps ending in bloodshed, raised between the young men whilst they were within his jurisdiction. If Dvaita took his revenge upon them, the grāmaṇī would be held responsible and might be called upon to punish Dvaita and so bring to naught his marriage scheme for his daughter. He had an obstinate belief in his own judgment of character and still considered Dvaita quite

a suitable match. Dvaita's disobedience to orders during the night attack was, so he argued to himself, only due to the hot blood of youth. It was clearly not due to lack of courage.

To gain the news they desired, Ojas and Āyu had to turn elsewhere. So they visited Apālā's aunt by whom they were warmly welcomed. From her they learnt that Vyoman was talking of having the wedding celebrated in two or three months' time. They told her about Dvaita's conduct and its dangerous consequences. She replied that Vyoman still seemed set upon this match. She hoped they would return and find some means of proving to Vyoman that Dvaita, who happened to be away from the village on a hunting expedition but would soon be back again, was really a worthless fellow. This would spare her the necessity of abducting her niece and so causing a family quarrel.

Declining her invitation to rest in the house until sunset when her husband would be home again, Ojas and Āyu bade farewell to their good-natured hostess and betook themselves to the edge of the forest near by, where they had tethered their horses. "Aha! brother," said Āyu, with a smile, "'tis not Suketu we came to see, is it?"

"No indeed," replied Ojas, with an answering smile, "it is not, though he and his wife are our very good friends."

"Well, let us lie down and sleep until the cooler evening hour when we shall doubtless see what we came to see." So saying Āyu stretched himself under a shady tree and fell asleep but Ojas sat down and,

with his eyes upon Vyoman's homestead, indulged himself in happy day-dreams.

When, at last, the sun was getting low in the western sky, Ojas' patient watchfulness was rewarded. From the house came the fair Apālā with her mother. As they walked along, Apālā clapped her hands and from the various houses other women and girls came forth in obedience to the summons. With merry laughter the group moved slowly along towards a green sward under the trees near the river bank. Arrived there, they divided themselves into two parties and, whilst one group sang, the other group danced.

"Rehearsing their dances for the spring festivals," said Ojas, "we shall not be able to have speech with her. So let us be moving on to Lopāśa's home and fix up something about Ghoṣā's marriage. But we must not stay there long."

"No," replied Āyu, "I'm anxious to start teasing the boaster. Besides, brother, you as head of the family must get married first. Ghoṣā must wait until you have caught your bride. So, truly, we must not stay long."

On their arrival at Lopāśa's village, they were cordially welcomed and very hospitably entertained. Lopāśa's parents were extremely grateful to them and never ceased to sing their praise. Ghoṣā was full of joy at her brothers' proposals for her future. The young men of the village, who had not been on the expedition against Śambara, looked upon them as heroes. Everyone was eager to accompany them on the hunt that Lopāśa was arranging for their amuse-

ment. When, therefore, Ojas said that they must return on the third day, Lopāśa was disappointed and pressed Ojas to tell him why he was in such a hurry. Ojas then told him the reason and Lopāśa exclaimed, "Oho! I see, you wish to hunt different game. I know that fellow Dvaita. He is a dangerous and unscrupulous man. So, with your permission, I and my comrades will come to Vyoman's village a day or two after you get there and see fair play."

Ojas thanked him, and on the third day he and his brother set out on their return. They reached the Three-Tree village soon after Dvaita himself and lodged in a house belonging to one of Lopāśa's friends. In the evening they accompanied their host to the Sabhā hall where most of the men, young and old, were to be found after the day's work enjoying themselves with dicing, singing, and surā-drinking.

The hall was long and fairly broad. The thatched roof sloped steeply on two sides away from the central ridge pole which was resting upon wooden pillars at intervals down the centre of the building. The walls were rudely made of wattled hurdles bound together between the stout posts that supported the horizontal beams to which the rafters were attached. Between the horizontal beams and the top of the wattled hurdles a clear space was left open for light and air. These hurdle walls were sometimes removed altogether. At the eastern and western ends and in the middle of the north side was a wide entrance; on the south there was none. The floor was of hard earth beaten down flat and smooth.

The brothers followed their host through the western entrance and walked a little way down the central space. On either side dicing matches were in progress with a little knot of interested onlookers around each. At the farther end groups of men were squatting or sprawling on the ground drinking surā and listening to songs and stories and, every now and then, bursting into guffaws of laughter.

About halfway down their host stopped and the three of them joined a circle of spectators that grew rapidly wider. "Here," whispered their guide, "an important game is about to begin between two of our most hardened gamblers. Let us watch them a while and after that you might like to try your luck."

"No," said Ojas, "we care not for this dicing; there is too much chance and too little skill about it."

"Well, I don't know about that," replied the other, "some men seem to get very quick in counting the nuts at a mere glance."

Inside a circle that had just been traced on the ground two men sat down cross-legged facing each other on either side of a small heap of sand. A servant armed with a flat stick then smoothened the sand level and placed an equal heap of vibhītaka nuts at the right side of each player. The challenger took four of these nuts in his right hand and named the stakes, a fine milch cow for each scoring throw. His opponent nodded and grasping a number of nuts in one hand threw them on to the smooth sand in front of him. The challenger, glancing intently at the nuts

just thrown, immediately threw down three of his four. Thereupon the other player stooped forward and carefully separated the nuts into little heaps of four whilst the challenger watched him closely to see that he played fair.

Altogether there were seven heaps of fours and nothing remaining over. "Kṛta, Kṛta," exclaimed the bystanders. The challenger had won. The score was marked down by two friends of the players who made scratches on wooden boards.

It was now the challenger's turn to throw down a handful of dice and for his opponent to cast as many as he thought fit of the four he held. After the division was made, two were found to be left over. "That's dvāpara," exclaimed Āyu turning to his host, "how do they score?"

"Oh," replied he, "these players disregard dvāpara and tretā throws; they play only kṛta for a win and kali for a loss but a double loss, that is for twice the stake."

And so, turn by turn, the game proceeded with varying fortunes except that towards the end, when the heaps of nuts were nearly exhausted, the challenger had the bad luck to find one left over thrice in succession after the division was made. "Bad luck to throw kali so often!" exclaimed Ojas, as the players rose to leave the Sabhā together for the winner to take possession of the cows he had gained. The circle of spectators broke up and the brothers followed their host to the farther end of the hall to sit down with a group of his friends who were calling to him.

It was just then that Dvaita, who had been drinking and singing and telling boastful tales to his boon companions of his exploits in war and the chase, caught sight of Ojas and Āyu.

"Aha," he called out in a boisterous, sarcastic tone, "here come the wonderful charioteers. Did ye hear, friends, how clumsily they were ambushed and lost their chariots and killed their fighting comrades? Each brave hero sprang on a horse to run from the black-faced Dasyu rabble but their steeds were braver than they and bore them most unwilling upon the foe."

"You lie in your throat, you drunken lout!" cried Ojas, with difficulty restraining his impulse to strike him in the face.

"Lie! lie in my throat, do I?" bawled Dvaita in a voice choked with rage. "Drunken lout, am I? I am no more drunk than you are, you landless slave. Ay, you may be Sudās' men but none the less you and your brother are lousy parasites."

Ojas clenched his fists and took two strides towards Dvaita, but suddenly found his way blocked by Vyoman who, having heard the insults, ran to prevent further mischief. By this time everyone in the Sabhā had crowded around and waited breathlessly for the next move.

"For shame! Dvaita, for shame!" cried Vyoman, "thus to insult our stranger-guests is intolerable. Speak, Ojas, what amends shall he be forced to make?"

"Sir," replied Ojas to the grāmaṇi, "yon fellow cast aspersions upon my skill as a charioteer and upon my courage. Let him run a chariot-race with me. If

he wins, we shall say no more of this incident; if he loses, he shall pay me one hundred cows."

"Generous terms!" exclaimed everyone present, "Dvaita, you are lucky!"

Though much chagrined, Dvaita dared not offend public opinion by declining this very sporting offer of the young man whom he had so grossly insulted. Vyoman and the elders of the village undertook to make the arrangements for this thrilling contest on the next most auspicious day, the seventh day later. Dvaita withdrew himself with his cronies, and the rest of the men present turned once more to their respective amusements.

CHAPTER XIV

Apala Speaks Her Mind

"Now, Āyu," said Ojas on the following morning as they were grooming their horses, "we must go and ask Suketu to lend us a chariot. These two steeds will go well as a pair. Perhaps we shall see the fair Apālā."

"Very well," answered Āyu smiling, "we'll go immediately and, on our way, invent excuses to go often."

They found Suketu in the yard adjoining his house watching his cattle being driven to their pastures. "Ah," he said, "I know what you two young fellows are after—a chariot. Take mine; 'tis a fine new one with stout new harness. I can lend you a pair of horses also, if you wish."

"Thank you, Sir," replied Ojas, "we'll use our own horses; they are accustomed to us. But we shall be glad, indeed, of your chariot and harness."

"Well, go along and fetch your horses. You must keep an eye upon them day and night now for that Dvaita is an unscrupulous fellow and might try to poison or to maim them."

So, whilst Āyu ran back to bring the horses, Ojas and Suketu pulled the chariot from its shed and laid out the reins and traces on the ground. As they were doing this, Apālā and her mother came in at the gate.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Suketu, "what means this early morning visit? I suppose your good husband

dropped a hint or two and then closed his lips. Too bad of him to whet your curiosity and then leave it unsatisfied!"

"Yes, brother-in-law," answered Apālā's mother, "that is exactly what happened. We are all agog to know what really took place last night. Is it anything to do with Dvaita?"

"Go inside and ask your sister; she knows it all. I never keep any secrets from her but I suppose your husband, being the grāmaṇī, thinks it wiser to say little and think much."

"Come along, Apālā," said her mother moving off towards the house. But Apālā lingered, torn in two between her desire to hear the gossip and to have speech with the stranger whose conversation she had found so entertaining some while previously.

"Hurry up, niece," said Suketu, "your aunt will be halfway through her story by now."

Stealing a glance at Ojas who was gazing in rapt admiration at the departing figure and noticing his niece's hesitation to follow her mother, the kind-hearted Suketu determined to give these two young people a chance to talk to each other before the ladies went home. He was about to say so when Āyu returned with the horses.

Suketu made him walk them round and then trot them whilst he looked on with a critical eye for he was no mean judge of a horse. "Yes," he said, "they move easily." When they were brought to a standstill, he patted their glossy necks and passed his hand along their flanks, hindquarters and legs. "In excellent

condition," he remarked, "you two young men have learnt how to take care of horses, I see."

"Yes," replied Āyu, "Citraratha taught us a lot."

"What he does not know about horses," answered Suketu, "is not worth knowing. You are lucky to be under the instruction of such a skilled horsemaster."

Then the three of them harnessed the steeds to the chariot and found everything satisfactory. As they were unharnessing them, Suketu's wife and her visitors approached. Suketu made an excuse to take the elder ladies to another part of the yard, at the same time giving a sly wink at Apālā and a nod of his head towards the brothers who were still busy with the unharnessing.

"Your terms are too generous, stranger!" said Apālā after a short silence. "Forgiveness and reconciliation if he wins and a paltry hundred cows if he loses!"

"Well, fair maiden," stammered Ojas, "he is not a great chieftain offering a sacrifice. Moreover, as you say, a hundred cows is a small stake but....but.... the prize is really far greater than that for the victor and 'tis not he that will win."

Apālā, ignoring most of these stammering remarks and pretending not to see the meaning lying behind them, replied: "Make not so sure, young Sir; Dvaita is not to be despised in such a contest. Why do you not give my father a chance to break away from his plans for me?"

"We shall find some other means of avoiding what you dislike."

"Ay, but I love my father and should hate to hurt him and put him to public shame by running away."

"But how could I demand such a stake as you have in mind, namely that Dvaita should give up his suit? How could I, a youth with his fortune yet to make, set myself up suddenly and publicly as a rival suitor?"

"Well then, since you are so sure of victory, why did you not demand that Dvaita should stake all his possessions?"

"Because Dvaita would, and with some justice, have refused such one-sided conditions and would have gained sympathisers. I should have been in the wrong and under your father's displeasure."

"I see," remarked Apālā pouting her lips. "You are cool and cautious, not bold and dashing. A wise old head upon young shoulders!"

"Is discretion then a fault in your eyes? First must Dvaita fall utterly from your father's good opinion and you will soon see how badly he will behave when he loses the race. Duly then could I...."

Apālā's vanity was hurt. Her romantic nature, which had something of the all-prevailing gambling spirit in it, was offended because the right to her hand had not been made the stake. Whether, if Dvaita won, she would accept his victory and her consequent marriage to him, she did not stop to consider. Instinctively she felt that the stranger would win because in her heart she wished him to do so. Her feelings were all in a whirl and somehow she felt a little bit disappointed in her hero. Probably he

was right but woman-like she would not show him that she thought so. Therefore she turned away and joined her mother with that scornfully expressed last remark.

Ojas ceased his reply and watched the fair one departing quickly with her mother.

"The damsel seems displeased," whispered Āyu, "but cheer up, brother, she is only pretending to be vexed with you. She loves you."

"She does or she did?" muttered the disconsolate Ojas, "who can say? Women are such riddles. I shall surely make her love me."

Suketu rejoined them saying, "Listen, I have an idea. Leave your horses here in my stables and help me guard them. I shall lend you another pair to take back to your friend's house. If Dvaita is going to try underhand tricks, he'll spoil the wrong pair. And, if we can prove anything against him, Vyoman must give him up as a suitable match for Apālā."

CHAPTER XV

The Chariot Race

THE brothers agreed to follow Suketu's suggested plan. Harnessing the borrowed pair to Suketu's second chariot, they drove it to their friend's house and kept a sharp watch. But nothing happened. "Ah," said Ojas, "if Dvaita attempts any dirty trick against us, it will be very shortly before the match."

The next morning, at daybreak, Ojas took out his own horses for practice over the course but at no time did he allow them to go at full speed. If anyone, on Dvaita's behalf, was watching their exercise, he would carry back a report that Ojas' pair were not of much use. Āyu took the other chariot to the course later in the morning and Ojas drove them but again not at full gallop.

When they returned to their lodging, they found Lopāśa and three of his comrades sitting down to a meal prepared by the wife of their friend who had gone out to his fields.

After a brief exchange of greetings, Lopāśa said, "What crooked game is that fellow Dvaita up to now? We saw him hob-nobbing with a couple of Aṅgiras priests in that village that lies halfway between this and ours. So we kept an eye upon his movements and, about sunset, followed him cautiously to the forest. There he joined his priest friends who had made ready a small sacrificial ground in a secluded spot. Unfortunately we had to watch from a distance

and could not hear what was spoken, but it was some sort of cursing business for we saw one of the priests take up something in a wooden spoon and a firebrand from the fire. Then, accompanied by the other two, he moved in a northerly direction and made an offering. After that, he threw the spoon away and then all three walked back to the fire without once glancing behind them. The fire was dispersed and they returned to the village. Can you throw any light upon these proceedings?"

"He was cursing me, I have no doubt," answered Ojas with a laugh and went on to tell the newcomers about the incident in the Sabhā, the chariot-race and all their plans and precautions against mischief.

"Well, it is no laughing matter," replied Lopāśa, "but leave it to me. I'll catch hold of some of these priests of the black art and get the curse brought to naught. At all events, Dvaita will rely upon it and not try any tricks that might be traced to his door. He won't meddle with your chariot or horses. So that's one good thing."

During the next few days Dvaita was as much encouraged as Apālā was disquieted by the reports that Ojas' horses were not a match for his own. The brothers also seemed worried about this when they were watching Dvaita training his pair. Dvaita, seeing their anxious looks, smiled maliciously.

News of the race spread throughout the neighbouring villages and people began to flock in from all sides. Dvaita's self-confidence was momentarily shaken by one of his cousins who came from Divodāsa's village

and had seen Ojas' horses at work. "My dear fellow," the cousin said, "Ojas has been deceiving you. His pair are every whit as fast as yours really. He has not allowed them to go their best. I know what I am talking about and am prepared to gamble heavily upon his winning."

"I strongly advise you not to," exclaimed Dvaita, recovering his self-assurance, "I also know what I am talking about."

"Oh," replied his cousin in a doubtful voice. "I wonder if he is up to any underhand tricks," thought he to himself. "I must see that he plays fair, for, after all, Ojas is one of our men now."

The day and the hour came at last. The auspicious moment had been found, on calculation, to be as the sun was about to set. The course was the usual one, half a mile eastwards to a rocky mound, a sharp right-hand turn round that and back again to the starting line. Ojas' chariot, harness and horses were in excellent condition; Dvaita had made no attempt to tamper with them.

Just before Ojas drove forth from Suketu's enclosure, Apālā's aunt brought him an oddly-shaped band of leather to bind round his forehead. "You may guess who sent this," she said as she fastened it on, "'tis a charm to keep the western sun from your eyes when you've rounded the mark. Pull it down before you take the turn. Let not Dvaita guess its purpose till it is too late."

Ojas' heart bounded with joy. She loved him after all. Who but a woman would have thought of the

sun's dazzle in the eye? He sent her his grateful thanks. "Tell her now," he said to Suketu's wife, "my horses will go faster than ever I allowed them to go during practice. She must have been disquieted by village gossip."

Ojas and Dvaita took up their positions side by side with the space of two chariots between them. Ojas had drawn by lot the inner station. The excitement was intense and the gambling was heavy. Dvaita's cousin had disregarded Dvaita's advice not to stake upon Ojas' victory.

Waiting for the starting signal, Dvaita gave Ojas a swift and rather scornful glance and noticed the leather band on his head. With a loud guffaw of mocking laughter, he exclaimed, "Ho! ho! what? already? a band to support the victor's wreath of lotus flowers? Impudent young coxcomb! I'll...."

But Dvaita had to leave his intentions unspoken, for the starter was about to give the word. Each charioteer bent forward, holding in the straining horses. The spectators held their breath. "They're off! they're off!" rose the sudden cry as both chariots bounded forward side by side. Now one, now the other, showed in front as they thundered towards the mark. Neither could claim any decided advantage. The rival supporters shouted themselves hoarse.

"Now," thought Ojas, "I must turn this flap down." In his anxiety not to turn it down too low, Ojas unconsciously slackened the reins as he quickly bent his head down between his arms. His horses, feeling the firm grip gone which had seemed to support

them, slackened speed for a few strides. Dvaita shot ahead sufficiently to justify his attempt to gain the inner station round the bend.

A shout from Ojas and an answering burst of speed from his horses compelled Dvaita to give way. Nevertheless, as they swept round the mark, his chariot wheels were dangerously near his rival's. He raised his whip and cunningly flicked its lash into Ojas' face to disconcert him but the leather shade over his eyes protected him from injury. It might have seemed a pure accident for, though it was unusual to touch the horses rounding a bend, some drivers cracked the whip as a kind of signal.

Ojas was furious and set his jaw sternly. Dvaita was, indeed, a difficult man to beat but beaten he must be at all costs. And now he was ahead raising a cloud of dust swept by the breeze into the eyes and nostrils of Ojas.

Breathing a prayer to the Aśvins and shouting to his horses, Ojas drew level once more. The full glare of the setting sun caught them full in the face. Dvaita shook his head angrily and tried to blink away the moisture that filled his eyes. He was the more angry when he realized that Ojas' eyes were protected against the blinding dazzle. He lashed his horses unnecessarily; they swerved slightly out of the straight path. He lost ground and cursed when he saw the wheels of Ojas' chariot level with his horses' heads. He jerked his team back to the proper track.

There was only a furlong more to go; but, was it more or less than a furlong? Dvaita could not be sure

for he could not see properly. Bitterly he cursed the stupid priests who had declared this hour to be the most auspicious. If he should lose, his sun of prosperity would surely set; his prestige would be lost.

With voice and whip he urged his horses on and they responded nobly. Neck to neck they were racing with Ojas' team but it was their last spurt, they could do no more. Then Ojas cracked his whip and called aloud to his pair. The winning post was a bare thirty yards distant. The spectators roared with excitement but neither of the competitors heard them, so intent was each upon his task. "Indra! ho Indra!" shouted Āyu, Lopāśa and his friends standing near the winning post.

Only ten more yards to go and still they were racing neck to neck. Then suddenly Ojas' horses seemed to spring forward as if hurtled through the air by some supernatural force. Ojas was almost jerked off his balance, so wonderfully swift was this last burst of speed. He found himself dashing over the line half a length ahead of his cursing rival.

As soon as he could, he checked his pair and, turning, drove slowly back to the post. His supporters were frenziedly excited and Ojas was overwhelmed with congratulations. Dvaita, madly angry and cursing volubly, drove straight off to his own house and was seen no more that day.

CHAPTER XVI

"The King is Dead"

ON the following day Dvaita, with a very ill-grace, delivered the hundred cows to Ojas in the presence of the grāmaṇī and the elders of the village. "Yes," admitted Vyoman reluctantly to himself when he saw the churlish manners of the loser, "the womenfolk were right. Dvaita is a selfish boor. I doubt whether he will bring happiness to my high-spirited and beautiful daughter."

The beasts were then driven into Suketu's stock-yard for he had promised to look after them until Ojas had a home of his own. "Strike whilst the iron is hot, my lad," he said to that young man, "delays are dangerous. I myself will tell my brother-in-law what Lopāśa told me about Dvaita's practising black magic against you."

"It is a common saying," answered Ojas, "that all's fair in love and war. Many men will think no worse of Dvaita for that business."

"Leave it to me. I'll see to it that Vyoman is not one of those many men. Ah! here they come."

Turning towards the gate, Ojas saw a large group of people coming in to partake of the feast of victory to which the hospitable Suketu had invited them. His eyes sought out Apālā in vain for she was already within the house helping her aunt in making ready.

"It was a very close race, Apālā. Ojas only just managed to win," said Suketu's wife to her niece.

"Yes, aunt, my heart was in my mouth all the time. His cocksureness quite frightened me."

"'Twas your gift that saved him. Apālā, you should have seen his face when I told him who had sent it!"

"Well, I hope he will now throw caution to the winds and boldly make his suit to my father for my hand."

"Hush, my husband is bringing him in."

"Here, Apālā, stop working a moment," said her genial uncle. "Ojas wishes to thank you himself for helping him to victory." Suketu and his wife then slipped away.

Apālā turned and looked at Ojas who suddenly felt shy and foolish under her steady gaze. But he recovered himself when he saw her smile and said, "Fairest of maidens, from my heart I thank you for your gift. Without it I should never have gained the victory. And now I shall speak to your father for the gift of your hand in marriage."

"Think you it will be as easy as that? Your assurance is truly wonderful! You may speak to my father if you will, but, even if he consents, there is another obstacle. What about my consent?"

"Another obstacle? your consent?" said the bewildered Ojas, "did....did you not send me the leather eye-shade? Was not that a proof of your love?"

"Say rather a proof of my hate. I did not want Dvaita to win and you were his sole rival in the race. What else, then, could I have done?"

This was an interpretation of her action that had never occurred to Ojas' mind and he was dumbfounded. He had felt so near the winning post and now the winning post was actually running away! Chariot-racing was child's play compared with this love business! He looked so miserable and woe-begone that the heart of the mischief-loving Apālā relented and she said softly, "My hero, I was but teasing you. I removed one obstacle from your path and I shall remove the other that I spoke of. At least, no, I cannot do that, for it was never there!"

"Beloved one, your words fill me with joy. I shall hasten to win a fortune and come back to claim you."

"I shall wait for you, beloved."

"Well, we are waiting for you two," said Suketu coming back to them just in time to hear his niece's last remark that pleased him very much. "The feast is set." He led them outside to join the throng of friends and relations who were about to take their seats in a circle upon the rushes freshly strewn upon the ground.

But hardly had the feast begun when there was a commotion at the gate. A messenger from Prince Sudās threw himself from the back of a foam-flecked horse and demanded admission. Immediately admitted, he sought out the grāmaṇī and said, "Sir, your presence is requested without delay in the royal village. Divodāsa's fever returned upon him and, though the fever demon was addressed as a god and fervently entreated to depart from him, when I was sent forth, he lay in deathlike stupor. By this time he is probably

dead in spite of all charms and incantations. Your feast must wait for a happier hour."

There was consternation at this news. The guests arose and took their leave after Vyoman, Ojas and Āyu had hurried out to prepare for instant departure. The only leave-taking of Apālā possible to Ojas was a smile of farewell. When duty called, the claims of love must wait. But Apālā, being a sensible girl, was content.

The messenger rode on to other villages whilst Vyoman with some of the elders of his village and the two brothers, in chariots or on horseback, hurried with all speed to the home of the Tṛtsu chieftain.

The cries of mourning that reached their ears as they drew near told them too plainly that Divodāsa had indeed succumbed, as the messenger had feared, to his malignant fever. They dismounted and joined in the sad procession that issued from the royal mansion, shaking loose their hair.

Divodāsa, shrouded in a new cloth, with his feet bound together and his hands also as they lay folded on his breast upon which was laid his bow, was borne along on a bier on the first stage of his long last journey from the world of men. Prince Sudās led the way carrying the sacred fire in a pot. As the procession moved onwards, Viśvāmitra, the purohit, recited verses urging the dead man to go on his long way, to unite with the Fathers and with Yama, to go home escaping the dogs of Yama. "May Pūṣan, whose kine are never lost, the protector of beings and one who knows the path, move thee up from here and

deliver thee to the Fathers; may Agni deliver thee to the all-knowing Devas."

Arrived at the place of cremation in a flat meadow near the holy Sarasvatī's stream, the bearers set down the bier by the side of the funeral pyre and, reverently lifting the body, laid it down upon the black antelope skin and Kuśa grass spread upon the wood. The purohita walked round the chosen spot thrice from right to left, sprinkling it with holy water and repeating verses which drove away all evil spirits. Near the head of her dead husband, the sorrowing widow, clad in the simplest of raiment and unadorned with jewels, took her seat on the pyre. A black goat was tied loosely to a corner of the pyre to break away unhindered by any when the fire was applied. Viśvāmitra came near but the mourners in hushed silence stayed their steps some distance away.

The voice of the purohit was then heard reciting the opening stanza of the funeral hymn that was so full of a quiet dignity, not marred by idle sentiment nor hysterical lament, yet not empty of loving affection and simple faith. The brothers, but more especially Āyu, felt themselves strangely moved by Viśvāmitra's chant

Depart, O Death, and go thy way far from us,
Far from the path which by the Gods is trodden.
Thou seest and hearest the words to thee I utter;
Harm not our children, harm not thou our heroes.

Then, turning to the assembled mourners, he bade them, who were yet rejoicing in life's vigour and increasing in wealth and in progeny, be pure and holy

in spirit. Happy they might count themselves to be in that the death lot had not fallen upon them.

Taking up a large stone, Viśvāmitra placed it on the ground half-way between the mourners and the pyre and, in doing so, he said

This boundary I place here for the living.
That to this goal no one of them may hurry,
May they live on through full an hundred harvests
And by this rock keep death away far from them.

On their behalf he then prayed that, as day follows day and the seasons succeed each other in due order, so might the Great Disposer order their lives and let the sons outlive the fathers. He prayed that they might fulfil their term of years and live to a ripe old age. He called upon Tvaṣṭṛ, the skilful Maker, to work long life for as many as were there assembled, running each his race in turn.

Then, at his bidding, a group of women, wives of noble husbands and friends of the widow, entered the consecrated place bearing in their hands unguents and balm to pour on the widow. They were bidden to come in festal array, well-decked with jewels and to show no signs of mourning.

When they had accomplished their purpose, Prince Sudās stepped forward and, taking his mother's hand, bade her arise and return to the world of the living for, he told her,

His breath is gone by whom thou sittest;
Who took thee by the hand once and espoused thee.
Thy wedlock with him now is ended.

His mother accordingly descended from the pyre and joined the other mourners.

Thereupon the son stooped and gently withdrew the bow from the dead king's hand praying that it might be for the survivors a means of help and strength and fame. "There art thou," he said to his dead father, "here are we. Rich in sons may we conquer all rivals and foes."

Viśvāmitra, after this, gave orders for a cow to be immolated and flayed. It was then placed on the body so as to fit it exactly and over all the hide was stretched. It was as though Divodāśa was being protected by armour against the coming onslaught of the flames. After making several oblations on the body, Viśvāmitra ordered the lighting of the pyre and invoked Agni to take the dead chieftain uninjured to the Fathers, beseeching him, whose voice is like the bellowing of a bull, whose glare illumines space, not to scorch or burn the dead but to take him with the swiftness of lightning to the Fathers. Then, addressing Divodāsa, the purohit told him to follow the ancient paths on which the Fathers went to behold Varuṇa and Yama revelling in bliss, and, clothing himself with a new and shining body, free from blemish, to enter his new home. Next Viśvāmitra implored Yama to allow his two dogs, the four-eyed guardians of the road, to protect the dead man, to prosper him and deliver him from suffering and disease. "May thy two messengers brown and broad of nostril that, greedy of lives, rove among the people, let us long behold the sun and give this man

renewed and happy life." Finally, turning to the assembled mourners he said, "Divided now are the living from the dead. Propitious was our sacrifice this day. Gladly must we enjoy life and, departing hence, dance and be merry in the days yet to come."

With these words, he and all the company turned away from the burning pyre and left the place without looking back. Reaching their homes the mourners bathed and offered libations of water for the dead, then they put on fresh raiment and performed other acts of purification.

On the second day, the mournful procession once more wended its way to the place of burning. Sudās, accompanied by the purohit and others, first made sure that the body had been well consumed and then sprinkled water mixed with milk over the bones with the help of a twig of the Udumbara tree saying, as he did so, "O Agni, him whom you have burnt up do you yourself make cool; and let Kyāmbu and pāka-dūrvā grow over this ground. Lo, I sprinkle upon thee drops from our divine Sarasvatī."

The dying embers were then quenched by water brought as often as necessary in three pots and cooling plants together with a living frog were placed upon the ashes.

Then the bones were reverently gathered up by aged persons, purified with a sieve or winnowing basket and placed one by one in a large urn which was put by Viśvāmitra into a pit with the words, "Go to thy mother Earth, thy kindly mother Earth, to all good men soft and tender as a maiden; may she guard

thee from evil." Taking up earth in his hands, Viśvāmitra threw it into the pit saying, "Open wide, O, Earth, press not down heavily, shelter him kindly and, even as a mother wraps her son with the border of her garment, cover him. Let the earth stand firm propped up beneath by a thousand pillars; let this, his new abode, ever drop with ghee and be a sure refuge."

Finally, the purohit covered the urn with a lid saying, as he did so, "I have heaped up the earth around thee; in placing this clod above thee may I not be harmed. This pillar may the Fathers bear up for thee and Yama provide for thee here a dwelling." Such were his last words to the man whom he had served so faithfully and well.

Leaving the spot, Viśvāmitra and all the company of mourners there assembled slowly wended their way homewards without casting a single look behind them.

CHAPTER XVII

Apala's Wedding

NEWS of Divodāsa's death spread very fast beyond the limits of the Bharata tribe and was welcomed by most of his former foes who began openly to talk amongst themselves of attacking their conquerors and of giving them the bitter cup of defeat and subjugation to taste. Purukutsa was the first to move in these intrigues. He came to an understanding with Śambara and sent messengers to the chieftains of the Yadu and the Turvaśa urging them to gain other allies and join him in an attack upon the overbearing, self-conceited Bharatas whilst they were still without a consecrated leader.

Viśvāmitra, realising what was likely to happen when the strong hand of his royal master was removed, had, even during Divodāsa's illness, sent out his spies amongst the tribes so that the Bharatas might not be taken unawares. It was not long before the half-expected but unwelcome reports of their hostile intentions were sent in by the far-seeing purohit's emissaries. He addressed the leaders of the clans and told them how necessary it was to elect their new chieftain immediately. They agreed and, in a formal assembly of the nobles and elders in the Sabhā, they forthwith chose Prince Sudās to be their king. And this choice was subsequently ratified by the representatives of all the tribal villages meeting in the Samiti hurriedly convoked for the purpose.

Thus far Viśvāmitra's advice had been readily followed but when he urged that, in view of the threatening dangers, the long-drawn-out ceremony of the Rājasūya or formal inauguration of the new monarch should be considerably curtailed, he began to meet with opposition. His opponents, headed by Vasiṣṭha, murmured that he exaggerated the dangers; nay more, that his emissaries acting on his instructions had invented them so that Prince Sudās might be hindered from choosing another purohit if he so desired. For everyone knew that the consecration of a purohit could not be accomplished in a short time. "Why," they asked, "should the mighty tribe of the Bharatas by an unorthodox shortening of the Rājasūya betray weakness and fear and show such a lack of faith in their gods? It was known to all that the Kuśikas who claimed to belong to a family that once had been royal were not true Brahmanas but were thrusting themselves forward to priestly dignity. Soma, Agni, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa would surely turn away from the Bharatas if the fullest honours were not paid to their divinities."

Citraratha, who happened to have a personal grudge against Viśvāmitra, influenced Sudās in favour of Vasiṣṭha. The Prince began to waver in his good opinion of his father's purohit, especially when Viśvāmitra, seeing that public feeling was against curtailing the ceremonies of the Rājasūya, advised him to establish friendly relations with the Yadu and the Turvaśa and any other tribes whom Purukutsa was seeking to gain over to his side. Only thus, urged

the wise purohit, could the Tṛtsus hope for unbroken peace for the next three years to enable them to hold all the sacrificial sessions that they wished to hold.

Sudâs turned a deaf ear to this sage counsel. Surely no one would dare to attack the mighty Bharatas if, as he was urged to do, he chose a bolder purohit and one more likely to hold the favour of Indra. For, might it not be indeed, as Viśvāmitra's opponents alleged, that Divodāsa's death and the escape of Śambara were due to the purohit's waning influence over Indra. Finally, Prince Sudâs, pondering these things in his mind, took the bold step of dismissing Viśvāmitra and of choosing in his stead the uncompromisingly orthodox Vasiṣṭha. Viśvāmitra, with a sore and angry heart, departed together with his sons from the territory of the tribe that he had helped so often to victory. He vowed that he would show the ungrateful Tṛtsus before long on whose side Indra really was.

Meanwhile Ojas was unhappy. Not for at least three years would the Bharatas move out on a campaign of conquest to celebrate the accession of the new king. He was in a hurry to grow rich by booty and the spoils of war so that he might wed his beloved Apālā. But who knew how long her father would consent to wait and risk his daughter's dying unwed. He decided to put his case before Citraratha.

"So," said that genial man on hearing the story, "that is what has been disturbing your mind of late, is it? Don't worry. I'll persuade our chieftain to make you his deputy-charioteer and give you a house

and a regular income. Meanwhile send a friend to Vyoman to do your wooing for you formally. If the grāmaṇī agrees to give you his daughter, you can go over there and get married."

"What if he does not agree?" suggested Ojas.

"Why, then, you abduct the maiden and I'll arrange the ceremony here as if I were her father. But Vyoman will surely give his consent for, though you may not be wealthy now, you certainly will be in a few years' time."

Ojas, much comforted, thanked him and sent Āyu to ask Lopāśa to act as his go-between. Lopāśa readily agreed and, with the help of Suketu and the news that Āyu brought of the support of Citraratha, found little difficulty in persuading Vyoman to give his consent.

On the receipt of these joyful tidings, Ojas obtained leave of absence from his new appointment and hastened to Suketu's home whither he had been invited. Nor did he go empty-handed. For Sudās gave him for himself a handsome niṣka or collar of gold, a gold bracelet and jewelled earrings and for Vyoman a valuable rukma, a golden star-shaped ornament wherewith to fasten together with a clasp the front folds of his mantle. As his own gift to his future father-in-law Ojas took a jewelled necklace of the kind known as a maṇi, that was in high repute for its talismanic powers. The bridegroom received rich gifts also from Citraratha and other personal friends, finely woven garments of gay colours with jewelled fringes and tassels and costly turbans. A bridegroom, they said,

who was one of their company, must cut a dashing figure. Such of his friends as were able to leave the royal village, whilst the sacrificial sessions preliminary to the anointing of Sudās were beginning, accompanied him.

The third day of the bridegroom's arrival in the Three-Tree village having been declared to be the most auspicious day for the happy event, Vyoman and his wife hastened their preparations for it and busied themselves especially in the arrangements for the wedding feast. The proper cooking of the flesh meat, eaten only on such high occasions, was of serious importance. Not until the feast was over and their guests had shown their appreciation of the fare provided, could the grāmaṇī and his wife feel quite easy in their minds.

On the marriage morning the whole village was full of glad excitement. The relatives and friends of the bridal pair, young and old of both sexes, dressed in their gayest and richest garments, with hair anointed, well combed and decked with flowers, crowded into and around Vyoman's house. The road outside the enclosure was lined by expectant groups of the lesser folk and the servants and slaves of the villagers. They also were to come in for their share of the feasting later on. Dvaita, however, and a few of his intimate friends, unable to bear the sight of his rival's happiness had left the village for the time being.

Joyful shouts along the road announced the approach of the bridegroom and his party. Ojas smilingly received the good-natured pleasantries of the

band of gay young women, Apālā's friends, who accompanied him, his brother, Lopāśa and a few other chosen friends to Vyoman's house.

On their arrival, they entered the house and, with the permission of the maidens who had come with him, Ojas gave his bride a new garment, anointed her and put in her right hand a porcupine quill, in her left a polished metal mirror. Apālā's relatives then put on her a reddish black cord of hemp with three amulets and upon Ojas they placed Madhuka flowers.

This done, the whole party passed out into the open courtyard where the wedding fire was being kindled by the friction of the fire sticks. Water was fetched and roast grains and a grinding stone were placed in position near by. Whilst these matters were being attended to, a priest chanted stanzas celebrating the marriage of Soma to the Sun-maiden Sūryā. Everyone listened attentively to the words describing this ideal marriage of the inseparable pair, a pattern for all wedded couples on earth.

Then Vyoman led his daughter forward to Ojas' side saying, "Tvaṣṭṛ formed her to be thy wife, Tvaṣṭṛ made thee to be her lord. Long life let Tvaṣṭṛ give you both, ay, even a thousand-fold life let him give." Bride and bridegroom then sat down upon a mat behind the fire. Oblations of butter were made by the priest for the sake of posterity and long life together. And to secure his daughter's prosperity in her new home Vyoman, with the point of a sword, offered an oblation of butter on her head. After this her mother made her stand upon the stone and poured

into her joined hands a quantity of the roasted grains whilst Ojas addressed her with these words, "Stand thou upon that, O peerless one of excellent glory; let Savitṛ make for thee a long life. He am I, she thou; chant am I, verse thou; heaven I, earth thou; here we both wish to unite in wedlock in order to obtain posterity."

After Apālā had offered the grains, the handsome bridegroom, taking her right hand in his own, addressed her in tones that thrilled with joy, "As Agni grasped the right hand of the earth, even so do I grasp thine. Do not falter, be with me with progeny and riches. I grasp thy hand that I may win good fortune, that thou with me as husband may'st reach old age. Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitṛ, Puraṁdhi have given thee to me to be the mistress of my household."

Solemnly and devoutly then did Ojas lead her thrice around the fire taking care to keep her right side turned to it. As they went he invoked Agni thus, "For thee, in the beginning, they carried about Sūryā, together with the bridal car. O Agni, give me, her husband, my wife together with offspring." At the end of each circuit Apālā stood again upon the stone whilst offerings were made to Varuṇa, Aryaman, and Pūṣan respectively. But before the third round was completed, Ojas spake thus to his bride, "Bhaga hath grasped thy hand; Savitṛ hath grasped thy hand; by ordinance art thou my spouse and I thy house-lord."

Now came the time when the bride had to take seven steps towards the north-east, the quarter of victory. Apālā did this by moving forward her right

foot and then dragging her left up to but not beyond it. When these steps had been duly taken, Ojas took her by the shoulders, lightly touched her heart and sprinkled water upon her from a jar carried by one of the assistants.

Thereafter, Apālā facing eastwards sat down whilst Ojas stood in front of her. He grasped her hand completely in his own in order to signify that he wished both sons and daughters to be born to them.

Now that he was wedded to his heart's beloved, Ojas made a gift to the priests in a most liberal manner of the hundred cows that Dvaita had lost to him. To the singer of the Sūryā hymn was given the bridal garment.

The time had now arrived for the departure of the wedded pair to the bridegroom's house. Outside the gate stood a four-wheeled waggon covered so closely with red flowers and with foliage as to be hardly known for what it really was. Two milk-white steeds were harnessed to it. The whole company moved out towards it.

Addressing his daughter, Vyoman spoke, "From Varuṇa's fetter with which the propitious Savitṛ bound thee, do I now release thee; with thy husband do I now set thee without blemish according to the pious ordinances." And turning to the company as if to be his witnesses he said, "From here I loose her but not from there; there do I bind her fast that she, O Indra, may be rich in sons and in fortune."

Then Apālā mounted on to the waggon whilst her father said, "The gold-cushioned car did Sūryā,

Savitṛ's daughter, mount to gain great good fortune. Let Pūṣan lead thee home, and let the Aśvins drive thee on their chariot. Go to thy home and be its mistress."

Joined by Ojas who sat down beside her on the skin-covered couch, Apālā gazed fondly at her maiden home. Then the waggon moved silently forward for its axle-boxes had been well greased. Many cows and horses, the bride's dowry, followed them and before them was carried in a pot the wedding fire. The bystanders exclaimed as the bridal car passed them, "Luckbringing is this bride; let us run together, and gaze upon her, wish her good fortune and then go we all home."

Arrived at last to the strains of the music of drums, flutes and lutes at the house which had been lent to him for the occasion, Ojas leaped down and gave his hand to his bride to help her to alight. As they approached the door, Lopāśa stepped forward and said, "May blessing attend thee here and the gift of children; in this house look well to housewifely cares; cleave close to thy husband and so may'st thou rule even in old age."

As Apālā was about to step over the threshold of her new home, the company present chanted, "Abide ye here, be never parted. Enjoy a long life sporting joyously with sons and grandsons. Bear heroes, love the gods and live in happiness."

And many more such stanzas of good wishes and blessing did the blushing bride listen to before she finally passed from the sight of her friends into her

husband's temporary home, there to fulfil the few remaining rites of the wedding day.

After a short sojourn in Vyoman's village, Ojas, accompanied by his brother and his friends, took his bride to Lopāśa's village, where also a house was lent to him for the occasion, to help him celebrate with due solemnity of ritual the nuptials of Ghoṣā and Lopāśa. This marriage also was the occasion of much joy and goodwill in the village where the young couple were very popular.

CHAPTER XVIII

Sudas is made King

ALMOST a year had now passed since Ojas brought home his beautiful bride to the royal village wherein she received a generous welcome from one and all. Her graceful beauty and her pleasant manners gained her universal favour. Ojas was very happy and urged his younger brother to find a wife for himself. "Time enough for that," replied Āyu smilingly, "when all this business of anointing and enthroning Sudās is finished. We've been at it for about a year now and must go on for another year or more. But I have my eye upon a splendid girl, Ojas, quite as fine as your Apālā."

"That is not possible," remarked Ojas, "but tell us who she is and we shall help you in your wooing."

"I'll tell you later on, not now. I must begin my courtship. She hardly knows yet that there is such a person as myself."

"All the more reason then why you should tell Apālā so that she can sing your praises."

"Well, yes, that 's true. I'll tell Apālā but she must not tell you; two singers of my praises would frighten the maiden and make her suspicious of my real worth. You are a great big strong fellow, Ojas, and in your hearty way you would overstate my good qualities. Apālā will be more tactful."

Then, after a pause, Āyu continued, "Any news yet of what the tribes may be doing? Old Viśvāmitra

was thoroughly alarmed, wasn't he? I am sorry for the old man; being turned off like that was hard luck!"

"The old scaremonger," exclaimed Ojas, "no news of any mischief on foot has come in; the tribes are quiet and Purukutsa's intrigues have come to nothing."

"Well," said Āyu, "this looks to me to be the calm before the storm. You may depend upon it that Viśvāmitra is moving about like a serpent and preparing the ground. He's bound to try to have his revenge for he hated Vasiṣṭha with a bitter hatred. 'T will be a rare tussle for the securing of Indra's aid!"

"Woe betide us if Indra turns away from us!" ejaculated Ojas.

"Let's not think about it," said Āyu, "we have other things to occupy our minds just now. I expect Apālā wishes you were the commander of the army or the chamberlain, or the keeper of the accounts or the huntsman or any one of the Jewels of the Court."

"Well, here she comes, you had better ask her."

"I heard you, Āyu," said Apālā, "you are right. I do wish he was one of the Ratnins. But, tell me, what is the meaning of this Ratnahavis business?"

"I asked the priests about it and they said that, after offerings have been made to ward off all evil influences, the court officials must be sanctified by offerings in their houses before they can take part in the rājasūya. And to guard against all mishap, even after this, Prince Sudās in his own house must make offerings to Soma and Rudra and, later, offerings

to Mitra and Bṛhaspati so that he may not 'depart from the path of the sacrifice by having put those unworthy of sacrifice in contact with the sacrifice'."

"The priests think of everything," said Apālā, "no wonder they want fat fees. When is the great day of the consecration? We may not live to see another such ceremony and I want to see and hear all I can."

"Well, you have not long to wait now in order to satisfy your curiosity," answered Āyu. "The abhiṣeka ceremony will take place on the first day of the bright half of Caitra."

"Āyu has a secret to tell you, fair wife," laughingly remarked Ojas. "I am not to hear it; he has no faith in my tact."

"Aha!", said Apālā, "I think I can guess what it is about. Come over to the shade of yonder tree, brother-in-law, and tell me."

So, whilst Ojas went about his business, Āyu whispered the name of his lady-love and besought Apālā's help in his courtship, which his kind sister-in-law readily promised.

When, at last, after so many preliminaries, the days came for the carrying out of the consecration ceremonies themselves, a mighty concourse of people, men, women and children flocked to the special sacrificial ground that had been prepared on the bank of the holy river Sarasvatī. For from this river many of the seventeen kinds of 'waters' to be used in the 'sprinkling' of the new monarch on the second day at the midday pressing of the soma were to be obtained.

The first day saw the sacrifice of a he-goat to Agni and Soma followed by oblations to eight gods 'quickeners and instigators' of all living creatures, the last oblation being to Varuṇa Dharmapati, Lord of Right. These rites did not particularly interest the spectators. But what immediately followed did. For Vasiṣṭha, the new purohit, taking Prince Sudās by the right arm, led him to the appointed place, commending him to the favour of the eight gods. "Quicken, O ye Gods, Sudās, son of Divodāsa, to be free from foes; instigate him to great chiefdom, to great lordship, to great rule over the people. This is your King, O Bharatas; Soma is the King of us Brahmans." Shouts of acclamation from the tribesmen answered this proclamation, the second half of which, however, they did not hear for it was spoken in an undertone.

Whilst the priests then set about the careful collection of the 'waters', the folk turned their attention to the various amusements that had been provided for their pleasure. Bands of dancers, clothed in gaily-coloured garments, to the clash of cymbals and the throbbing of drums, with graceful, rhythmical movements swayed this way and that, now fast, now slow, ever and anon bursting into song in praise of Varuṇa and the ṛṣi Bhṛgu. Their places were then taken by dancers of another sort. Under the shady trees pits had been dug across which stout rounded poles were laid. On to these ran men holding long bamboo staves in their hands. For a moment they stood still, then with the burst of wild music from conches, drums and shrill-toned flutes, they broke into quick dancing

steps and, throwing back their heads, balanced the bamboos on their foreheads. With strong upward jerkings, they threw the bamboos into the air and deftly caught them again on their foreheads. Never once did they miss their footing nor let the staves fall until, at last, with a simultaneous shout, they ran over the poles and catching the staves in their hands disappeared from view. They were loudly applauded. After this, the crowd slowly dispersed.

On the next day, the people assembled again in greater number than before. Many, however, finding the soma-sacrifice ritual tedious, delayed until the sun was nearing the zenith when the special ceremony of the day was about to begin. There was room for all and no need to push into the front ranks. Standing behind the seated rows of spectators, it was easy even for the late-comers to see what was passing. Apālā, Ojas and Āyu were amongst these and the first thing that struck Apālā was the enormous herd of cows that passed, in a seemingly unending stream, in the directions formally prescribed by the ritual. They formed the right royal sacrificial fee that Sudās had to make to the priests on this unique occasion. "Husband mine", she whispered, "do not you become a King or else we shall be ruined!" "There are plenty to be got," he answered, "by a few bold raids."

The gaze of all was now concentrated on Vasiṣṭha who was spreading a tiger skin in front of the four wooden bowls, destined to hold the 'waters' after he had strained them through two sieves. "Thou art Soma's beauty," he said as he laid the skin on the

ground, "may my beauty become like unto thine!" Then, raising himself up, he made six oblations hailing in turn Agni, Soma, Savitṛ, Sarasvatī, Pūṣan and Bṛhaspati. Next preparing two strainers or sieves into each of which he put a piece of gold to ensure immortality for Sudās, Vasiṣṭha solemnly poured the 'waters' through them into the four bowls.

This duly accomplished, the purohit proceeded to robe the Prince in his consecration robes. First he drew over him the close-fitting tārpya garment, woven of materials derived from the tripa plant. Sewn into this were pictures of spoons and other sacrificial implements. Over this he made him put on a garment of undyed wool and over this again a grey mantle or cloak. On his head he put a turban passing it once as a band across the forehead, fastening it behind and bringing the two ends forward over the shoulders to be tucked in behind the girdle. All the while he muttered sentences signifying that these garments were, so to say, the birthplace of knighthood.

Having thus clothed him, Vasiṣṭha had now to arm the new king. So, stringing a bow, 'Indra's Vṛtra-killer', he stroked both Sudās' arms with it and then handed it to him saying, "May he slay Vṛtra by thee." After this he handed him three arrows praying them to protect him in front, behind and on all sides.

Thus robed and thus armed, Sudās was then made to announce himself in a clear voice to the gods, Agni lord of the house, Indra the far-famed, Mitra and Varuṇa upholders of the law, Pūṣan the all-possessing,

Sky and Earth the all-propitious, Aditi the wide-sheltering goddess. In this manner brought under the protection of the kind gods, he was firmly secured against evil forces by the purohit's placing a piece of red metal in the mouth of a long-haired man sitting near by.

To show to all assembled that their monarch was indeed lord of all the regions of space Vasiṣṭha caused him to 'mount the quarters' by taking a step towards each region. Then Sudās, lifting his foot again, kicked away a piece of lead that had been placed on the tail of the tiger skin, saying as he did so "kicked away is Namuci's head". Even as Indra had beaten off the evil Rakṣas, so by this action did the king do likewise.

Being thus indued with power and secured from all evil, Sudās was now fit to receive the besprinkling with the power-infusing 'waters' and to be made ready for immortality. Vasiṣṭha made him step upon the tiger skin which was, as it were, the very beauty of Soma himself. Under his foot he placed a small plate of gold and on his head another, pierced with nine holes, thereby enclosing him with immortal life, for gold was the symbol of immortality.

Now all was ready for the sprinkling. With arms uplifted and face turned towards the east, Sudās was solemnly besprinkled in front by his purohit, on his right side by a nobleman, on his back by a Vaiśya and on his left by a near kinsman. Thus, amidst the awed silence of the assembled multitude, was he sprinkled with the glory of Soma, with the brilliance of Agni, the brightness of the Sun, the power of Indra, the

strength of Mitra and Varuṇa and the force of the Maruts. And, in order to spread this new vigour given by the waters over his whole self, Sudās rubbed himself all over with the horn of a black antelope.

The newly-anointed king had now to engage in a mimic raid with his chariot to prove that all men were now subject to him. Apālā's interest had begun to flag over the further details in the ritual just concluded but this was something fresh and an important feature of the day's ceremony. Anything connected with chariots interested her, even the empty show of a fight in which the king won a bloodless victory, for to her mind there was a life and a spirit in the swiftly-moving vehicle and she firmly approved of its being called "Indra's thunderbolt". For naught else had it been, when Ojas won his memorable victory.

Moving over to the low-wheeled cart on which the king's resplendent new war-chariot had been brought to the side of the cātvāla or pit just beyond the north-east corner of the Vedi or sacrificial area, the purohit drew the chariot down and brought it to the king. Citraratha followed, leading four horses. These Vasiṣṭha proceeded to yoke to the chariot with appropriate mantras. Citraratha mounting and taking the reins drove at a foot pace back to the cātvāla along the track ordained for the cows that were given as dakṣiṇā or priests' fee, whilst the king and the priests followed. Then Sudās, still with his arms uplifted and holding his bow and arrows, mounted and was driven slowly into the midst of a herd of a hundred cows, belonging to one of his kinsmen that had been previously

driven some distance to the north. Lowering his right arm, Sudās prodded one of the cows in the flank with the end of the bow in token of his successful capture of the herd.

After this, the charioteer wheeled round to the right and passed down the eastern, then along the southern boundary of the Vedi until they reached their starting point. Here a pair of boarskin sandals was placed in the chariot (the boar being a spirited creature) and into these Sudās slipped his feet and, gazing steadfastly on the ground, said, "Homage to Mother Earth; may I not harm Mother Earth; nor she me!"

Whilst the horses were being unharnessed, oblations were offered to Agni, lord of the house, to Soma, lord of the forest, to Indra's might and to the Maruts' force. Then Sudās descended to the ground and gave his ornaments of silver and of gold to the Brahman priest. The chariot, with Citraratha still standing in it, was then dragged away to the chariot stand and hauled up on to it. This done, Citraratha leaped down; thus he did not descend on the same world on which the anointed king had just descended.

A dish of clotted curds having been prepared for Mitra and Varuṇa the king lowered his arms and, handing his weapons to the chief archer, put his hands into it before it was taken to be offered on the high altar.

All these proceedings had been followed with breathless interest by the spectators. Āyu whispered to Apālā, "I wish the winning of booty were always as easy as that! My wooing would find a readier response!"

"Courage, brother, with me to help you the maiden's consent will be easily won!"

. "No doubt, but what about her father's consent!"

"Even him shall I win over by my eloquent praises of you. But, hush, what is happening now?"

Looking up and seeing a throne-seat of khadira wood bound with thongs being placed on the tiger skin, Āyu replied, "They are now going to enthrone the king."

Vasiṣṭha spread a mantle on the seat and taking Sudās by the arm placed him on it, saying "Seat thee on the comfortable one, seat thee on the soft-seated, the birthplace of knighthood." The officiating priest and his assistants then beat him silently with sticks on his back to make him exempt from punishment, to guide him safely over judicial punishment. The four leading priests then sat down on all sides of him and a dialogue ensued between the king and each of the priests in turn who extolled him, though the words could not be heard except by the Ratnins who were seated along with them.

Then the Brahman handed Sudās the wooden sacrificial sword which he in turn handed over to his kinsman, he to the purohit and he to the Ratnins or court officials until it came to the Akṣāvāpa or Keeper of the Dice.

With this wooden sword, the last-named official prepared a place in the sand for the symbolic game of dice. A member of each of the four main classes of the king's people seated himself at the board. The Keeper of the Dice threw down a thousand dice and

taking four hundred of these up on behalf of the king exclaimed, "Victory to the King!" Then he handed five golden dice to Sudās exclaiming, "this king has won a victory over all the regions of space!"

Then the hotṛ, a priest of the family of Bhṛgu, was called upon to recite in a loud voice the legend of Śunaḥśepa, the poor Brahman's son who was sold by his father to a certain king to be offered in sacrifice to Varuṇa as a substitute for the king's own son. The hotṛ told the tale in a most moving way, narrating how none could be induced to bind the poor lad to the sacrificial post until his own father was bribed to do it with his own hands. And when none could be found to kill him, the father consented to do that also for a further reward. But the victim's earnest prayers to the gods saved him. The hotṛ ended, saying, "Varuṇa the king will deliver us, he whom the captive Śunaḥśepa invoked once on a time."

With this, the special ceremony of the day was brought to a close. Sudās was led from his throne-seat to continue the ritual of the Soma sacrifice in which the abhiṣeka ceremony had been an interlude. The crowds gradually melted away until but a few were left to witness the ceremony of the final bath of purification.

CHAPTER XIX

Sudas Takes the Bull by the Horns

DURING the rest of the year after the abhiṣeka of Sudās, whilst the Tṛtsus were peacefully and piously celebrating the many sacrifices that would bring to its ripe completion the rājasūya or inauguration of their new monarch, the storm clouds of war were gathering unheeded by the many. But as, one by one, the heralds sent out by Sudās to all the tribes to announce his accession to the throne of his famous father Divodāsa Pijavana returned to tell him what they had seen and heard, Sudās became disturbed in mind and began to wonder if he had not been overhasty in his dismissal of his former purohit Viśvāmitra. For he could not conceal from himself that Viśvāmitra was more of a statesman, a cooler and a wiser head in matters of policy than the fiercely orthodox Vasiṣṭha, who made light of the threatening storm. "What, O Sudās, hast thou to fear? The blustering words, like unto the crackling of thorns under a pot, of petty chieftains that say they are Indra's friends and yet make friends of the barbarians, who know not Indra but worship false gods! Words of vaunting boastfulness! For what foolishness, behold, they speak when they say that they too can make great sacrifices to Indra and win his favour. Let not the proud Bharatas think, say they forsooth, that Indra is their god alone and none else may call upon him! Foolish is their boast that Viśvāmitra, the All-Friend, is as ardent a devotee of

the Lord of the Sky as any that are left with the Tṛtsus! Lies, O Sudās, lies and foolishness are such words! Heed them not."

But Sudās would not be lulled into heedlessness of his danger. He knew the skill of Viśvāmitra in the making of alliances between tribes the most aloof and selfish in their affairs. He knew that Viśvāmitra burned to avenge the dishonour shown to him and he knew that the tribes beyond the Paruṣṇī resented the presence of the Bharatas that prevented their expansion eastwards and still smarted under their defeats by his renowned father. Viśvāmitra claimed the credit of those victories, for he alone by his most earnest prayers had made the rivers hold back their waters to give passage to his lord. Under such skilful and inspiring leadership as that of Viśvāmitra, the confederate tribes would hold together and overwhelm the Bharatas, strong though they were.

For these reasons, then, Sudās determined to act with vigour and resolution. He would march rapidly against them to forestall their coming together and to get a chance, before it was too late, to attack them severally. He knew the truth of the saying 'the fortune of a man who sits, sits also'. Therefore he commanded the war-drum to be sounded throughout the clans and villages of the Bharata people.

Nowhere was more zeal shown in preparing for war than in the villages of the Tṛtsus, the royal clan of the Bharata tribe. Lances, spears, swords and battle-axes were sharpened; bows and bowstrings tested and arrows barbed and feathered. The smith and the

carpenter were hard at work repairing old chariots and making new ones, besides the waggons for the carrying of supplies and spare weapons. Helmets and corselets of mail were polished. The women busied themselves in making charms and amulets to guard their heroes against evil of every sort. The priests offered sacrifices to strengthen Indra's arm for the benefit of his zealous worshippers. Incessantly was the mighty god invoked to secure the tribe in this crisis of their fate.

Sudās held a council of war in which he explained to his captains his plan of campaign. He told them that they must make forced marches into the heart of the enemy country so as to take them by surprise before they could combine effectively and that, in order to guard his right flank, he would send a strong force under Vyoman to keep Purukutsa in check. Meanwhile, the garrisons left behind in all their big settlements must throw up strong earthworks with ditches and palisades. The outlying villagers were to concentrate in these strongholds at the first sign of attack.

Having gathered his forces, Sudās set out northwards with drums beating and banners flying. The womenfolk gaily waved them farewell and bravely restrained their tears. Apālā set them a good example. Though her heart was torn with anxiety she betrayed no sign of it but cheerfully spoke of her hero's return covered with glory to look upon the face of his yet unborn child.

Purukutsa was the first of Sudās' enemies to hear of his marching forth to war. Leaving his villages

strongly garrisoned against the unscrupulous Śambara, he led his men westwards to harass and check the Tṛtsus whilst his messengers hastened with all speed to tell Viśvāmitra to hurry south. The chieftain of the Pūrus, thinking that the impetuous Sudās would heedlessly leave his flank unguarded, sped onwards with his war-chariots in joyful anticipation of an easy victory. But he met with a rude surprise. Vyoman's strong force lay across his path and, whilst the warriors on foot resisted his attack, Ojas and Āyu, whose services as charioteers had been specially asked for by Vyoman, with skilful daring attacking the Pūrus on both flanks, drove them back in much confusion. Purukutsa then resolved to march northwards to join his allies, guarding his left flank securely. Vyoman also turned north keeping pace with the Pūrus to prevent them attacking Sudās.

On receiving the message sent by Purukutsa, Viśvāmitra, the organizer of the great confederacy of the ten kings against his former master, sent his messengers to speed up the tribes who were already advancing slowly from the north-western mountains. The Pakthas and Alinas from the country north of the Krumu, the Bhalānas and the Viṣāṇins from the region between the Krumu and the Gomatī, the Śivas from near the Sindhu, lured on by the promise of rich booty, hastened their marches.

Meanwhile the Aryan confederates, the Druhyus, the Turvaśas, the Anus who dwelt between the rivers Asiknī and Paruṣṇī together with the Yadus from further west, concentrating on the Paruṣṇī, awaited

their coming and that of the Pūrus. Here they were joined also by the tribesmen of the two sons of Vikarṇa.

Viśvāmitra in the council of war urged an enveloping movement and the leaders approved. The Yadus with the Pakthas and the Bhalānas who were now not far distant were instructed to cross the river lower down and threaten Sudās' left flank. Word was also sent to Purukutsa not to cross but to stay on the further side so as to envelope the right flank.

But all this clever strategy was forestalled by the sudden appearance of Sudās and his Bharatas on the southern bank of the Paruṣṇī. It was Sudās' intention, after giving his men a couple of days' rest, to force a passage across. Meanwhile the two hosts, facing each other across the river, hurled defiance at each other in which, on the Bharata side, disparaging and scoffing remarks against the 'All-Friend' renegade priest were mingled.

Sudās, however, found that the ford was too narrow; his men could not cross on a wide enough front. Therefore he planned, on Citraratha's advice, to retreat so as to lure the enemy to follow him and then turn upon them. Vasiṣṭha, however, counselled patience for, in a few days, Indra would surely answer their prayers and make the wide flood shallow and easy to cross. This time, so insistent was his purohit, Sudās hearkened to his word.

Vasiṣṭha's words came true for the water in the river suddenly receded from its banks. Sudās ordered the attack but suddenly countermanded the order

because stragglers from the rear ran in to warn him that the river was flowing once more in its old bed which they had recently passed dryfoot. The enemy now began to show signs of attacking. They were in overwhelming force and with a river at his back Sudās found himself entrapped. He determined, however, to stand fast and, holding the southern bank to await the onset of his now jubilant foes.

It was felt that Indra had betrayed them. Vasiṣṭha engaged himself in more solemn sacrifice and with his fellow-priests called yet more loudly on Indra to encourage and protect his true believers. But the cause of the strange happening had been human agency, not divine.

CHAPTER XX

Apala's Hopes Fulfilled

"Āyu, Āyu, come quickly!" shouted Ojas from the top of a rocky little hillock up which he had just scrambled. His younger brother hastily tethered to a stunted tree the horses he was holding and raced up the slope.

"What is it, Ojas?" he exclaimed breathlessly. Pointing across the plain, Ojas replied, "Look, far over there by the river banks at those herds of cattle. See that black mass. There must be thousands of them. What booty! An easy capture if we are quick. Ride back and fetch Lopāśa and the others."

Vyoman, having lost touch with Purukutsa who seemed suddenly to disappear, had sent out scouts in all directions. Ojas' party had already come within sight of the Paruṣṇī without seeing a trace of the Pūrus. They had been eager to leave the Pūrus alone and join the main army under Sudās but Vyoman had told them that they could not be spared. Their special duty was to ward off the Pūrus and that duty they must fulfil.

Lopāśa and the others were soon with Ojas on the top of his hillock straining their eyes into the distant scene. "That mass is not cattle, Ojas," exclaimed Lopāśa suddenly, "it's men! And look there at that white gleam coming slowly along the dry river bed! Why! it's water! They've breached the Paruṣṇī's bank and sent the river into one of its former courses! Now, why? That's the question."

"I don't know," answered Ojas, "but, without a doubt, for no good purpose. Luckily we did not cross that old river bed. We must get all our men and put the river back into its proper course when that enemy tribe has moved off. Do you think they are the Pūrus, by any chance?"

"Hardly so, I think, but no matter who they are, we must let them go before we appear on the scene. Come along."

Soon the small party were scurrying back over the plain to Vyoman to tell him what they had seen. The grāmaṇī immediately set out with all his forces, marching through the night.

Arriving at the newly-made breach, they set to work at the formidable task of diverting the river back into its former course. The enemy had chosen a narrow stretch for their evil purpose. Huge trees, evidently weighted with rock, had been thrown across the bed and with more rocks and earth had made a strong dam. Vyoman decided not to mend the breach in the bank itself but to go further back to where the new stream passed through a shallow rocky ravine. Here it would be easier to topple down rocks and earth to dam it up.

Both tasks were attacked simultaneously. Whilst one party hacked and hewed with battle-axes at the tree trunks and tugged them away by strong leather ropes made of chariot harness twisted together, the other party levered up the rocks on the sides of the ravine and tumbled them into the new stream, shovelling earth on top of them with their bare hands.

A shout arose. Approaching from the north-east in clouds of dust were many chariots. "The Pūrus are coming!" was the cry. Vyoman immediately ordered Dvaita to get his chariot squadron ready and engage the enemy. Ojas was perturbed and whispered to the grāmaṇī whether he thought it safe to send Dvaita on such a task. Dvaita, seeing this and guessing what was being said, strode back angrily and addressed Ojas thus, "Ojas, I may and do hate you for a bride-stealer but I love my home and my tribe and will gladly die to preserve them. Be not so ungenerous!"

Dvaita did indeed prove his loyalty for he and his chariot-warriors checked the oncoming foe in spite of much loss until Vyoman was able to send them reinforcements. Ojas led these and, passing Dvaita covered with blood and sweat, shouted words of encouragement and praise. Dvaita, with the exhilarating excitement of battle upon him, shouted back, "I drive once more at the foe. Stop a moment, Ojas, I'll race you into them."

Ojas drew rein and waited. Side by side in friendly rivalry the former antagonists drove hotly at the foemen. Alas! it was Dvaita's fate to fall with an arrow through his ribs. In this race a noble death was the prize.

The Pūrus, who had gone higher up the river to find easier fords, having received Viśvāmitra's message had come back again to try once more to force their way through and get at Sudâs himself. When they saw what the Tṛtsus were doing, they

redoubled their efforts but in vain. The river flowed once more in its proper course and the Pūrus lost heart for further fighting because their chieftain Purukutsa was killed in the last attack led by Ojas. Learning this, Vyoman left half his force on guard against them and marched off to rejoin his king.

Meanwhile, miles lower down the river, a stern battle was being fought lasting a whole day. The confederate kings threw masses of archers and slingers across the now shallow waters on a wide front. They suffered heavy loss but they succeeded in crossing and establishing themselves on the further bank, whilst the chariots were driven over though not without some difficulty in the heavy water-logged sand.

Sudās withdrew his forces in orderly array, and awaited the enemy's advance on more level ground. Having formed themselves up also into battle array, the confederate tribes moved forward with loud shouting of their war cries. In loosely-formed groups, village by village, clan by clan, under waving banners and to the sound of vigorously-beaten drums the Bharatas engaged the advancing foe. The hand-to-hand fighting was fierce. Shouts and curses and the cries of the wounded filled the air whilst the drums beat incessantly. The charioteers on each side tried to drive into the groups of those fighting on foot but their opponents prevented this manoeuvre.

When, after a while, the enemy foot warriors were driven back to the river bank, their places were taken by swarms of newcomers. The Bharatas were

out-numbered; their reserves were few. They in their turn had to give ground, albeit fighting sternly.

Then Sudās, bringing up his chariot reserves, for some time regained the upper hand and made terrible slaughter amongst the footmen. And once more gaining possession of the bank, the Bharata bowmen were able to shoot down many of the fresh horses that were being brought over for the enemies' chariots. So there came now a welcome lull in the fighting.

Later in the day, the enemy, throwing over a force lower down the river, began to attack Sudās' left wing at the same time hotly engaging him in front. And so, once more, the Bharatas had to give ground.

All through the fighting Vasiṣṭha the purohit on rising ground a little to the rear had been offering sacrifices and loudly invoking Indra's aid. He and his assistants now increased the vehemence of their appeals when they saw how desperately hard pressed the Bharatas were.

On hearing the cries of the priests the Bharatas took heart, rallied and stood their ground. The enemy drew off for a moment to gather fresh impetus for their attack. At this juncture, confused and agitated cries arose concerning the river. The waters were coming back! An unreasoning panic seized the enemy; chariots and footmen broke their ranks and raced back. Sudās, with a mighty shout answered from many throats, immediately led his men forwards. The Battle of the Ten Kings was won; the enemy were broken. And in their wild stampede many

were trodden underfoot, many were shot down whilst swimming in the flood, many were drowned, even chariots were overwhelmed and their occupants swept away.

Crossing now, without opposition, over the narrow ford Sudās pursued the stricken foe, burnt many of their villages and captured great herds of their cattle. It was indeed a decisive triumph and Vasiṣṭha celebrated it with a hymn in praise of Indra declaring how, by Indra's aid:

"Fled are the Yadus with great loss; the tribesmen led by Vikarṇa's sons fell in swathes beneath the strokes of Sudās' sword even as straw is chopped down."

"They went into the river as if destruction was their goal. The kings of the Anu aud the Druhyu peoples first and then King Kavaṣa, the renowned, the venerable and Śimyu the Vaunter, the godless one, were drowned and became the flotsam of the flood. Alone did Turvaśa the swift one escape. Not all the prayers of the Bhṛgus nor of the Kaṇvas could save them."

"The runaways went, crowding as they could around the 'Friend', calling upon him to save them; but the 'All-Friend' was powerless, frightened like a victim tied to the post of sacrifice."

"So like cattle from the meadow without a herdsman, pretty cattle, they followed one another."

"The Tṛtsus, the piercing, the destroying ones, without allies, save Indra alone, did scatter the godless and utterly despoil them."

But Sudās' troubles were not yet over. On nearing his homeland he learnt that the Dasyu tribes on the Yamunā led by King Bheda were attacking his fortified settlements. He hurried onwards and again by Vasiṣṭha's intercession was crowned with victory on the Yamunā's bank. Bheda lost much booty and the Ajas, the Śigrus, and the Yakṣus were forced to bring tribute.

Not until then, when all his foes were defeated, could Sudās lead his victory-flushed warriors home again. Joy and sorrow were mingled in this home-coming; for though many returned, not a few had lost their lives in the service of their tribe. Their widows bore their sorrows bravely. But Apālā was one of the fortunate women, for her dearest hopes were now fulfilled after weary months of anxiety. With immense pride she put into the arms of her dear lord his little son born during his father's absence.

Āyu's wooing was rendered easy now, for the maiden's father had been killed and her eldest brother, who had fought side by side with the young lover, had become one of his warmest admirers.

Ojas did not forget to offer, now that he had gained great wealth as his share of the spoils of war, the great sacrifices he had vowed to make on behalf of his dead parents. By these sacrifices he hoped to induce the gods to cease from hindering their going from restless wanderings to the abode of bliss with the ancient fathers.

Sudās also offered a sacrifice, the most splendid of all sacrifices, that of the Horse, to celebrate the

great favour shown to the Bharatas by Indra and to supplicate for a continuance of the Bountiful One's favour to himself and his people. Vasiṣṭha, regarded now as one of the most marvellous of men, also lifted up his heart in song to his god Indra. One stanza of his was, for many generations, sung on suitable occasions by men of the Bharata tribe.

O Indra, god by the gods obeyed,
Thou didst hear our invoking cry.
We bless thee for thine instant aid,
O Maghavan, Lord of the Sky.

— *THE END* —

BY INDRA'S AID

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

ABBREVIATIONS

K.R.P.V. Keith's Religion and Philosophy of the Veda.
V.I. Vedic Index.
Ṛgv. Ṛgveda.
J.A.O.S. Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J.R.A.S. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

CHAPTER I

Rain spells (p. 1)—*vide K.R.P.V.*, 389.

Parjanya (p. 1)—the rain cloud, the thunder cloud. The name is also applied to Indra with whom Parjanya has much in common. Sometimes he is described as a bull whose roaring waters delight the earth.

The pur (p. 2)—the pur in the text is what is known as a Śāradī pur, that is, a place of refuge against foes or autumnal floods caused by overflowing rivers. Often these purs were of considerable size. They are mentioned as used by the Dasyus. There is no reason to suppose that the Āryans did not copy their enemies in using purs. The authors of the *Vedic Index* maintain that "it would probably be a mistake to regard these forts as permanently occupied fortified places like the fortresses of the mediæval barony. They were probably merely places of refuge against attack, ramparts of hardened earth with palisades and a ditch." The Āryans of the Vedic Age lived in village settlements, a pastoral and an agricultural folk. But did the non-Āryans live in fortified towns with wooden walls and ditches such as, in later times, Pāṭaliputra (Megasthenes)?

Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda differs from the *Vedic Index* view. The discovery of the buried cities of Mohenjo-daro in Sind and of Harappa on the Paruṣṇī (Ravi) causes him to give a different meaning to the word 'pur'. He equates it with 'nagara', classical Sanskrit for 'town'. He thinks that "there is no doubt that the Ṛgvedic Āryans were familiar with towns and cities of aliens. There existed and the folk-memory remembered that there once existed Ārya worshippers of Indra who waged wars against civilized aboriginal neighbours living in towns and fighting from within strongholds." He does not hold that the Ṛgvedic Āryans reached the lower course of the Paruṣṇī long after the disappearance of the folk that built the ancient city of Harappa and when that city was already in ruins. He equates this aboriginal townsfolk with the Paṇis of the Ṛgvedic hymns, wealthy merchants who did not offer sacrifice and did not give gifts to priests. *Vide Ṛgv.*, I, 124, 10; 83, 3; III, 58, 2; VI, 45, 31–33; and VI, 53. He says definitely that "the terms pur, pura, mean 'city', 'town' and not 'fort'. The Sanskrit equivalent of 'fort' is durga which also occurs in the *Ṛgveda* (V, 34, 7; VII, 25, 2). In one stanza (I, 41, 3) not noticed by the authors of the *Vedic Index*, durga and pura occur side by side."

For further arguments see his *The Indus Valley in the Vedic Period*. Dr. R. Shama Sastry says, "the interpretation of pur as a city as contrasted with a fort needs further investigation. It may be left as a controversial question for the present."

Vāstoṣpati (p. 2)—Lord of the House. *Vide Ṛgv.*, VII, 54.

Surā (p. 3)—an intoxicating spirituous liquor from fermented grains or plants. It was, as opposed to Soma, essentially a drink of ordinary life: the drink of men in the Sabhā, giving rise to quarrels. *Ṛgv.*, VIII, 2, 12; 21, 14. *Vide V.I.*

"*Though he had not yet seen eighteen autumns*" (p. 3)—autumns, winters, harvests is the Vedic idiom. Contrast the English idiom in which 'summers' would be used to denote the age of a youth and 'winters' that of an old man.

Pūṣan (p. 4)—'a knower of paths', 'lord of the ways', guardian of the roads removing the wolf and the way-layer. He preserves cattle, keeps them from falling into pits, finds them when lost and brings them home. He is always associated with the goat; his chariot is drawn by a team of goats; perhaps the goat, being a sure-footed animal, was a form of Pūṣan. His name means "the prosperor"; according to Yâska, 'the Sun'.

'*The black-faced noseless ones*' (p. 5)—*Ṛgv.*, I, 130, 8; IX, 41, 1; V, 29, 10.

anās (*a-nās*) noseless.

CHAPTER II

"*Arrows tipped with horn or bronze*" (p. 10)—the word used is ayas: it may be iron or copper or bronze. *Ṛgv.*, VI, 75, 15.

CHAPTER III

Indra's fight with Vṛtra (p. 19)—Indra is a very great god to the Ṛgvedic priests. He is a colossal giant with tawny hair and beard and enormously long arms: drives in a chariot drawn by a pair of tawny horses or by many horses; his weapons are the vajra or thunderbolt, a bow and arrows, a hook or a net. He is the lustiest of all drinkers of soma of which he consumed three lakes when seeking to destroy Vṛtra. He is described as having parents, but he killed his father in order to obtain the soma. He is closely associated with the bright Maruts, the deities of the Storm Winds who together with Viṣṇu helped him in the struggle when all the other gods had fled at the roaring or hissing of the serpent Vṛtra lying on the mountains (*i.e.*, the clouds) keeping

in with its coils the waters of the streams. By their singing the Maruts strengthened Indra for the slaying of Vṛtra and by his 'striding out lustily' Viṣṇu did the same kind office. Viṣṇu is the Sun-god but he is constantly identified with the sacrifice, the embodied spirit of the sacrificial rites: and, in later times, this latter conception of Viṣṇu as the magically potent sacrifice sufficed to explain how his 'stepping out widely' was an essential factor of Indra's success.

This fight with Vṛtra has constantly to be repeated and even earthly priests will lend their aid and so we may say that this myth represents the coming of the thunderstorm, the falling of rain and the subsequent sunshine. The 'cows', often referred to in this myth, may simply be the waters or they may be the rays of light set free when the waters are loosened. Vṛtra will then be the demon of drought and Indra will here represent the god of the firmament or sky, the personified atmosphere.

"*Indra smote the mountains more fiercely than ever*" (p. 25)—here we may say that as in the Vṛtra myth the mountains are the clouds and Indra by smiting them unlocks the rain or we may think of the mountains being frost-bound and the waters frozen until Indra 'unlocks' them.

CHAPTER IV

Saramā (p. 27)—Indra's dog who tracked down the hiding place of the cows that had been stolen by the Paṇis and demanded their return.

The sons of Saramā (p. 27)—Yama's two brindled dogs who are called Sârameya. They wander about and guard the path to the sky; possibly they may go among men as Yama's messengers and take the souls of the dead to Yama's abode. In the *Ṛgveda* their function does not seem to be to discriminate and separate the good souls from the bad souls. Bloomfield holds that they represent sun and moon.

"*It takes the craftsmanship of the Ṛbhus themselves.*" (p. 30)—*vide Ṛgv.*, IV, 35. They are three skilful workmen, originally mortals who were endowed with immortality because of their feats of skill. They made a three-wheeled car for the Aśvins ; two bay steeds for Indra ; and converted into four the one drinking cup of the gods fashioned by Tvaṣṭṛ ; they rejuvenated their frail and ancient parents ; they are connected with Indra and the Maruts. *Vide Ṛgv.*, I, 161, 4, 5 ; IV, 33, 5, 6.

CHAPTER VII

Śambara (p. 47)—frequently mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* as an enemy of Indra who helped Divodāsa Atithigva to win victories over him: his forts ninety, ninety-nine, a hundred are also alluded to. He was quite possibly an aboriginal enemy living in the mountains. In *Ṛgv.*, VII, 18, 20, he is spoken of as having deemed himself a godling. *Vide V.I.*, II, 355.

Atithigva (p. 47)—an epithet descriptive of Divodāsa (Servant of Heaven) as giver of cows to guests or slayer of kine for guests. In the earlier Āryan times cows were regularly slain in honour of certain types of guests ; in later times the guest could decline the offered cow and take some other fleshmeat in its stead. *Vide Āśvalāyana*, I, 24, 31, and *Gobhila*, IV, 10, 22. The argha or ceremonial reception of a guest was a very interesting affair.

A cow was given to a bridegroom either soon after his arrival at the bride's house (*vide Āpastamba*, III, 5, 7 and *Sāṅkhāyana*, I, 12, 10) or four days later and another cow was, later on, slaughtered at the bridegroom's house in honour of those whom he held in high esteem, his teacher or his father and so forth (*Āpastamba*, III, 8). *Vide* also *Ṛgv.*, X, 85, 13.

Pārāvatas (p. 47)—a people settled near the Yamunā (Jumna). *Vide Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX, 4, 11.

"*Indra, the Exalted One....*" (p. 49)—*Ṛgveda*, VII, 21, 5. For phallus (linga) worshippers being mentioned as

abhorrent, see also *Ṛgv.*, X, 99, 3 ; it is very probable that these worshippers opposed by the singers were aborigines. There is little trace of phallic worship among other Indo-European peoples, whereas it is prominent in Indo-China. *Vide K.R.P.V.*, 632 note.

CHAPTER VIII

Dīkṣā (*consecration, initiation*) (p. 52)—This was a rite to be performed by a sacrificer and his wife before the Soma sacrifice. The original idea was to engender tapas or heat so that these two might reach a state of ecstasy and be made more akin to the divine. The elements in it are hunger, silence, loneliness and sweating, stammering in speech when speech was necessary and keeping the hands clenched. The power given by tapas was tremendous, *e.g.*, by it Indra won immortality. When the sacrificer or his wife felt an itching sensation they could not use their hands for scratching because their bodies were too full of the divine essence. The theory of the dīkṣā in the *Brāhmaṇas* was that it represented a new birth ; the stammering, the closed fist, the use of cooked milk instead of water show that the sacrificer is as a new born babe. Thus one who is not a Brahman is converted by this rite temporarily into a Brahman. *Vide K.R.P.V.*, 300.

The Agnikṣetra, why bird-shaped (p. 54)—Agni is often called a bird. *Ṛgv.*, I, 164, 52 ; X, 114, 5. Soma was brought down from heaven by the bird-shaped *Gāyatrī* (*vide Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, XIII, 1, 2). This metre represents Agni in his lightning form who opens up the clouds and fetches soma from the sky. Furthermore, a later idea is that a bird form will carry the sacrifice to the world of heaven more efficaciously than any other.

CHAPTER IX

The Soma plant (p. 56)—This plant can hardly be now identified : it grew on mountains, that from Mount Mūjavant

being specially renowned. It was probably a milky climbing plant *Asclepias acida*. Roth thought it was the *Sarcostemma acidum*. The juice when extracted and pressed through a sieve was mixed with milk, curd or sour milk or grain, possibly sometimes with honey. The morning pressing of soma was specially connected with Agni, the midday with Indra and the evening with the Ṛbhus, though many other gods might have a share. The drink exhilarated and excited the drinker; quite probably it was rather unpleasant and it certainly caused vomiting rather easily, if we may judge by the setting up of a special expiatory rite the Sautrâmaṇî. It is difficult to say whether it was ever a popular drink.

Forms of the Soma sacrifice (p. 56)—There are three classes of Soma sacrifice according as the soma pressings take place on one day (Ekâhas) or on two to twelve days (Ahînas) or on more than twelve days (Sattras). The form of the sacrifice in this chapter is the Atirâtra which occupies a day and a night; it may be classed under either the ekâha or the ahîna forms. The simplest form is the Agniṣṭoma, where the last chant of the twelve prescribed is a sâman in praise of Agni. By adding more stotras and śastras and more cups of soma and more animal victims and sometimes by changing the tunes, other forms of the ekâha type were obtained. The Atirâtra is essentially an ancient rite; it is referred to in *Ṛgv.*, VII, 103, 7.

Omission of the Pravargya rite—I have omitted this very interesting rite for a sufficiently good reason. The text-books of ritual put it in twice on each of the three upasad days; in earlier times it came probably once only, in the mornings. But the *Aitareya Brâhmaṇa* says it must not be performed until after a Soma sacrifice and the *Kauṣîtaki Brâhmaṇa* explains this by saying that the sacrificer must first have his body completed by the Soma sacrifice before he can receive a head.

This head is symbolically supplied in the Pravargya rite which briefly is as follows :—A clay pot (the Mahâ-vīra) is fashioned together with two reserve pots, of course in a special manner : milk and ghee are poured into it and heated up, the pot being covered with a golden plate, a symbol of the sun. The hot drink is offered to the Aśvins and the sacrificer drinks his share of it, thereby gaining power at the same time as the sun is strengthened. For this rite was probably in origin a sun spell. The various priests, of course, do their several parts in due order, for it was considered an important and ancient rite. The "Frog Hymn," *Ṛgveda* VII, 103, refers to it. At the end, the utensils are arranged on the ground so as to make up the semblance of a man, the three Mahâvīra vessels marking the head, for the pot is to the sacrificer the head as the sun is the head to the universe.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, I, 22, 14, explains the rite as a mystic union of the gods, which produces a new body for the sacrificer. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* would seem to treat the pot as a symbol of the sun. *Vide K.R.P.V.*, 332, 333.

The Soma Cow, why red (p. 56)—This was in order to match the colour of the soma plant, brown, or ruddy or, most often, tawny. On all occasions, the colour of the victim was symbolical of the supposed nature of the deity.

The Soma-seller deprived of his price (p. 57)—Soma was, whether stolen by them or not, at all events once living amongst the Gandharvas. In order to get him from them the gods had to bribe them by the gift of Vâc, (Speech), the Gandharvas being fond of women. Vâc, however, promised her former owners to return to them when they called her. *Vide* the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, III, 2, 4, 2-6 for the story about this episode invented to show why "even to this day women are given to vain things."

The Gandharvas' connection with Soma (p. 57)—The Gandharvas dwelt in the sky or atmosphere and one of their offices was to prepare the heavenly soma juice for the gods. In the *Ṛgveda* the word usually occurs in the singular. Therefore, probably, there was originally thought to be only one spirit or deity who knew and revealed the secrets of heaven and divine truths generally. Perhaps he personifies the fire of the sun. He stands erect on the vault of heaven and guards the soma.

Divodāsa enters into a covenant with the priests . . . (p. 57)—This was very necessary for so great and dangerous was the power of the sacrifice that intentional mistakes or such mistakes as could not be covered up and rectified by the Brahman priest, whose special task it was to safeguard the sacrifice, would turn the sacrifice from a blessing into a curse and destroy, instead of benefiting, the sacrificer.

The Agnicayana, 'the piling of the fire-altar' (p. 58)—This was an elaborate rite often lasting a year, sometimes only a few days : not a normal or frequent rite, probably only undertaken occasionally and then by a rich noble or prince or Brahman. One of the sacrificial victims originally was a man : later on, a golden figure of a man was placed under the lowest layer of bricks, symbolical perhaps of Agni ; under this figure was a gold disk, symbol of the sun and under this again was a lotus leaf, the birthplace of Agni. Over the image of the man in the first, third and fifth layers were three naturally perforated bricks representing the three worlds. Through them the golden man could breathe and the sacrificer rise to the sun. The object of the rite was to reconstruct Prajâpati who as the primitive Puruṣa or Man (*Ṛgv.* X, 90) had sacrificed himself and made the various parts of the world from his limbs. This sacrifice was a constant process and therefore the dismembered god must ever and again be renewed. The Soma sacrifice, as the

sacrifice *par excellence*, was identified with Prajāpati the creator god.

For a philosophical development of this theme *vide Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X, 3, 3 ; 6, 4, where Prajāpati is the year, symbol of time and the creator is essentially time. *Vide K.R.P.V.*, 354-355 ; 465-467.

The four sounding-holes (p. 60)—These holes which joined together at the bottom were intended to make the noise made by the pressing stones doubly resonant in order more efficaciously to drive away the demons.

Dakṣiṇā (p. 64)—*Ṛgv.*, X, 107. The fee of the sacrificing priests, usually a cow—a prolific (dakṣiṇā) one—or so called perhaps because the gifts were placed on the right side of the sacrificer for him to divide. The *Dānastutis*, verses in praise of gifts and, later on, the *Brāhmaṇas* greatly exaggerate these gifts. Besides cows, other articles of personal property were given, horses, chariots, ornaments and so forth but not land. *Vide V.I.*, I, 336 ; II, 82.

Sacrifice of a barren cow (p. 65)—The key passage concerning cow sacrifice in Vedic times is *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, Adhyāya XVIII, 11, 12, 13, wherein the anūbandhyā is explained. In the *Meghadūta* Rantīdeva's sacrifice is mentioned and in the *Uttararama Charitra*, Bhavabhūti, Act IV. Viṣkambara portion, the cooking of a she-calf as food for the kings is referred to as an ancient custom. *Vide* also my note above on Atithigva.

"*We have drunk the Soma, we have become immortal*" (p. 65) —*Ṛgv.*, VIII, 48, 3.

CHAPTER X

Viśpati, grāmaṇī (p. 67)—*vide Cambridge History of India* I, 91, *Vedic Index* I, 244-247, 269-71 ; II, 305-308.

The old theory upon this difficult subject—the division of the people in an early Vedic Āryan tribe—was as follows : first, the family or household, then the grāma or village of many households presumably related by

close family ties, then the viś or canton (a *local* sub-division), then the jana, the people, comprising a group of cantons. But the evidence for this sub-division in the *Ṛgveda* is scanty and very uncertain for the terms viś and grâma are used very vaguely. Keith holds that the viś may well be a sub-division based not on locality but on blood relationship, *i.e.*, a clan. A village might contain a whole clan but more probably it contained at most a section of a clan : possibly also parts of several viśas. In this last case the words of my text would have to be changed ; there being only one grâmaṇī for each village, he could not lead the various separate contingents when merged in the larger groups of their respective viśas. In support of my text that the jana was divided into several viśas, *vide Ṛgv.*, X, 84, 4 ; 91, 2. Nevertheless I must admit that the sub-division of the viś into several grâmas is conjectural.

CHAPTER XI

Râjanya (p. 76)—*Ṛgv.*, X, 90, 12. A man of the royal family. The term may have been originally restricted to members of the royal family and, later, included others, *i.e.*, the nobles. Likely enough these noble families, unrelated to the royal family, were families of minor princes whose rule was merged in that of the king on the formation of a powerful tribe. When strictly applied the term Kṣatriya would have a wider denotation than Râjanya. As a rule, however, the two expressions are identical. *V.I.*, I, 203 ; II, 216, 217.

CHAPTER XII

Agni Daivodâsa (p. 82)—*Ṛgv.*, VIII, 103, 2. Agni is here called by Divodâsa's name ; this shows that Divodâsa was an energetic supporter of the fire ritual and that Agni was a god who was closely related to man ; lord of the clan, the protector of settlers, lord of the house. We hear, also, of the Agni of Bharata, of Devavâta, of Trasadasyu.

The Āngirases, the Bhṛgus and the Vasiṣṭhas were closely connected with him.

CHAPTER XIII

The Aśvins (p. 89)—For a full account see *K.R.P.V.*, 113-119. See also *Hindu Gods and Heroes* (Wisdom of the East Series), John Murray, 35, 36. This inexpensive little book is worth reading about all the chief Vedic deities.

The following points may be noted :—The Aśvins are essentially twin gods. So they may represent the half-light, half-dark period before dawn (the twilights) —less plausibly the morning and evening stars : for the morning, the dawn, is the especially appropriate time of their appearance ; they receive the morning litany (Prātaranuvāka) : their normal time is after the dawn and before the sunrise but they are also said to awaken Uṣas : they, alone of gods, are described as having ruddy or golden paths. The epithet "Dasra" wondrous is almost exclusively theirs ; they are called nāsatyas, the significance of which term is hard to explain though it has been explained as na-asatya "not untrue". They bring the glorious sun to life again after his death or disease during the night or again after his longer obscuring of many days and nights in the rainy season, helping Indra in rescuing the sun and the dawn from the clutches of Vṛtra the demon of darkness, the clouds in the rainy season. So they are naturally looked upon as divine physicians. *Vide* also *Ṛgvedic India* (second edition) by Dr. A. C. Das of Calcutta University, pp. 549-562 where explanations of the many legends of help and assistance to persons in distress and disease, lameness, blindness, decrepitude, drowning, etc., are offered on the lines above indicated. These interesting achievements of the Aśvins have been summed up by Macdonell. *Vedic Mythology*, 21.

Dicing (p. 93)—Throughout Vedic literature there are very frequent allusions to dice-play : it has also found a place

in the ritual of the Râjasūya. In the epics, in the Jâtaka stories and in classical literature there are abundant references to it. The pâśaka form of dice, long prisms with four faces marked 1, 2, 3, 4 and with rounded ends similar to those used in India nowadays, seems to have been unknown in the Vedic epoch, for the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* evidently refer to vibhītaka nuts when they speak of hundreds or heaps of dice. *Vide Ṛgv.*, X, 34-5. The former kind were obviously the dice used in the famous game played by the Yakṣa Puṇṇaka against the king of the Kurus, *vide Vidhurapaṇḍitajātaka*, 545. There were, in fact, several forms of dice-play. In the epic stories we have sometimes one, sometimes another form. The form described in my text is supported by the description of the ritual dicing given by *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, II, 8, 9 : *vide* also *Apastamba*, V, 19, 4 ; XVIII, 18, 16, and in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* it is said, "if there are four stomas it is Kṛta, but if there are five stomas, it is Kali."

You landless slave (p. 96)—The point of this gibe is that Ojas was a mere stripling in the service of another and was not yet enjoying the independent status of a householder or head of a family owning landed property : how, then, dared he speak as he did to his betters ? For individual ownership of land, *vide Ṛgv.*, I, 110, 5 ; VIII, 91, 5.

CHAPTER XV

Priests of the black art (p. 104)—From the *Atharvaveda* we learn that the Atharvans contributed the auspicious and the Āngirases the black magical rites.

CHAPTER XVI

The fever demon (p. 111)—Takman is the technical term used in the *Atharvaveda* for various forms of malarial fever. Though this name does not seem to occur in the *Ṛgveda*, an attack of malaria, especially during a campaign in

the hills, was only too probable an accident in the earliest times. Note how they tried to propitiate this evil spirit by politeness.

Burial or cremation (p. 113)—" Both modes existed in the early Vedic period as in Greece; but the former method was on the whole less favoured and tended to be regarded with disapproval." *V.I.*, II, 175.

" The idea that burning was necessary to take the soul to heaven is not Vedic; the *Ṛgveda* proves that from the earliest recorded period the unburnt dead went to heaven no less than the burnt." *K.R.P.V.*, 417.

See *Ṛgv.*, X, 15, 14: here " fathers " who were agnidagdhāḥ, burnt with fire, and those who were anagnidagdhāḥ, not burnt with fire, are referred to. Keith argues from this as above but Ramaprasad Chanda says the latter epithet " does not necessarily mean 'buried' but may as well refer to those who could not be cremated by accident." Yet, it must be admitted that verses 10-13 in *Ṛgv.*, X, 18, seem more suitable for burial of the corpse than for burial of the bone relics of a cremated body in a cinerary urn, which the later ritual texts enjoin. On the other hand, *Ṛgv.*, X, 16, 1-6, probably belonging to a later period, is intended for the ceremony of cremation.

Omission of the goat, 'Agni's portion' (p. 113)—*Ṛgv.*, X, 16, 4, expressly refers to the burning of a goat with the corpse, apparently to act as guide to the next world. But 'aja' may mean 'the unborn part' as Weber prefers to take it, *Proceedings of the Berlin Academy*, 1895, 847, *vide* *V.I.*, I, 9 note. And so I have omitted this item. For the protecting of the corpse by a garment of fat (the immolation of a cow) *vide* *Ṛgv.*, X, 16, 7.

" *A group of women, wives of noble husbands.......*" (p. 114) —*Ṛgv.*, X, 18, 7, here I follow the reading ' yonim agre ' go first, go in front to the place, instead of ' yonim agneḥ ' go into the fire.

Kaegi (*Ṛgveda*) says " now women with ointments enter the circle and approach the dead lying on the bier, to deck the widow, in token of her re-entrance into intercourse with the living." That the widow survived is shown by verse 8 in which the brother of the dead man bids her become his wife. This presumably was only the case if she were sonless. *Vide* also *Ṛgv.*, X, 40, 2, and for widow re-marriage *vide Atharvaveda*, IX, 5, 27. The *Vedic Index*, I, 488, says " The custom of satī would therefore appear during the Vedic age to have been in abeyance, at least as a general rule."

Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 329-331, argues that *Ṛgv.*, X, 18, merely proves that satī was not practised in the particular tribe and place to which the singer belonged : he argues that satī being a custom among so many Indo-Germanic peoples was therefore probable enough among the Vedic Āryans, at least among some tribes : he quotes *Atharvaveda*, XVIII, 3, 1, as mentioning that it was ' a very ancient rite '. From the analogy of other Indo-Germanic tribal usage, it is probable that the practice was mainly usual in families of the warrior class.

Dr. R. Shama Sastry says, " Satī seems to have been a Dravidian custom and not an Āryan custom as proved by the numberless satī-stones of Dravidian kings in the South."

" *Clothing himself with a new and shining body. . . .*" (p. 115)— This implies that he does not become a spirit but himself continues in life in a state of bliss and will, when necessary, be addressed by his own name. Nothing is known of the fate of the wicked or of a place of punishment. The doctrine of transmigration or metempsychosis is not in the *Ṛgveda* nor in the *Ṛgvedic Brāhmaṇas* because the only passage that might possibly mean this, *viz.*, *Ṛgv.*, X, 16, 3, may as well refer merely to the dispersion of the body that is being cremated.

Cooling plants together with a living frog (p. 116)—*Ṛgv.*, X, 16, 13, 14. "They have in them the nature of the water, a fact which shows clearly how real the presence of the deity in a symbol was to the Vedic conception." *K.R.P.V.*, 381.

For the first and second metrical renderings in this chapter and for the couplet on the title page I am indebted to Arrowsmith's translation of Kaegi's *Ṛgveda*.

CHAPTER XVII

For the elective character of the Āryan kingship *vide Ṛgv.*, X, 173, 1, 2; 124, 8 and *Atharvaveda*, VI, 87, 88. It was also often hereditary, for we can trace the descent in the monarchy of the Bharatas and of the Pūrus. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XII, 9, 3, speaks of "a kingdom of ten generations". The election by the people (*viś*) was probably acceptance rather than choice: in the early times the people, assembled together on the occasion of the election, gave the king an armlet called maṇi made of palāśa wood. The king's duty was to protect his people and to rule them justly; otherwise they might expel him.

Sabhā, Samiti (p. 118)—According to Zimmer the Sabhā was probably the local village assembly and the Samiti the central or general tribal assembly. Professor Macdonell would make no such distinction between them saying that the King used to go as much to the one as to the other, *vide Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, III, 3, 4, 14 and *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, V, 3, 6. But the *Atharvaveda*, VII, 12-1; VIII, 10-5, 6, distinguishes between them. It was very important for the King to be on good terms with the Assembly, *vide Ṛgveda*, X, 166, 4 and *Atharvaveda*, VI, 88.

The consecration of a purohit (p. 119)—This was the Bṛhaspatisava, an ekâha soma sacrifice (*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, II, 128-130) preceded by the performance of the Vāja-

peya "drink of strength" rite: this latter rite might also be used by the king before the Rājasūya.

The Kuśikas (p. 119)—Viśvāmitra calls himself the son of Kuśika, *Ṛgv.*, III, 33, 5; in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 17, he is called rājaputra (son of a king) and in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXI, 12, 2, he is called a king. Keith maintains that Viśvāmitra was not a Kṣatriya; all Vedic ṛṣis, he says, were Brahmans (*J.R.A.S.*, October 1908, p. 1140).

Viśvāmitra: Vasiṣṭha: Sudās (p. 119)—The relations between these three are obscure. I have followed in the main the *Vedic Index*, II, 274, 310. From *J.R.A.S.*, July 1888, I derived my ideas about the rival policies of the two purohits: they are plausible enough but how far actually historical it is impossible to say. Doubtless the competition for patronage and a consequent livelihood between the different priestly clans and families provides an adequate explanation of the traditional rivalry between this famous pair. Nevertheless the purohit was eminently the adviser of the king in secular as well as in religious matters and, therefore, divergent views as to foreign policy and orthodoxy may have raised quarrels.

"*On whose side Indra really was*" (p. 120)—In *Ṛgv.*, VII, 33, 2, we see that the Vasiṣṭhas took away Indra from Pāśadyumna Vāyata's Soma sacrifice to that of Sudās, though the former had taken the trouble of recalling the god from far away: the gods were evidently not thought of as able to be present at every offering at one and the same moment. It is the view of the Mīmāṅsakas, the interpreters of the Vedas, that the gods are not omnipresent.

The marriage of Soma to Sūryā (p. 123)—*Ṛgv.*, X, 85, 9, 26. The Aśvins here are the grooms-men who seek the bride for the husband. Therefore they are invoked to conduct the bride home to her husband in their chariot. According to another legend the Aśvins jointly wedded Sūryā

who chose them from amongst the other gods. For other details in the wedding *vide* the wedding hymn, *Ṛgv.*, X, 85, generally.

Tvaṣṭṛ (p. 123)—the skilled artificer bearing an iron axe; he made Indra's bolt, Brahmaṇaspati's axe and the drinking cup of the gods; he was slain by Indra his son because he withheld the soma.

Savitṛ (p. 124)—'the stimulator' one 'who stirs up'; he represents the vivifying power of the sun (Sūrya); he was an impersonal deity with no human element in his character such as Indra possesses plentifully.

Bhaga (p. 124)—in Iranian Bhaga means simply a god. In the *Ṛgveda* he is an Āditya having Uṣas (Dawn) for his sister; he is the bountiful giver of good things.

Aryaman (p. 124)—an Āditya, Indo-Iranian in character; of a friendly nature; the name denotes 'grooms-man'. The Ādityas, sons of Aditi (absence of bonds, freedom), were deities of celestial light in general. They hate falsehood and punish sin, put fetters on their enemies but protect their worshippers and forgive their wickedness; they drive away sickness and ill-fortune and grant long life and offspring. Aditi "free," "unbounded" is either the expanse of the sky or the endless wide-spreading earth. She is called "mother of the gods" and is invoked to release from sin. Perhaps several gods were first grouped together as 'sons of guiltlessness' and a mother was conjured up for them from this phrase and then the members of the group were called Ādityas. *Cp.*, Śavasi, Indra's mother, arising from the word Śavas, 'son of strength'. *Vide K.R.P.V.*, 217.

Puraṁdhi (p. 124)—corresponds to the Avestan Pārendi, goddess of plenty and abundance. Hillebrandt calls her a goddess of activity. She and Anumati ('favour of the gods') represent the class of deified states or conditions of being.

Varuṇa (p. 124)—usually grouped with Mitra; has several

hymns to himself alone whilst Mitra has only one, *Ṛgv.*, III, 59. They are Ādityas; Mitra (friend) is a kindly god. The Iranian Mithra is the sun-god, the *Ṛgvedic* Mitra is the same. In later literature Mitra produces the day and Varuṇa the night (and so represent sun and moon). They are the noble lords of the gods. They control the physical and the moral order of the universe. Varuṇa is essentially connected with the waters (at first ærial, later terrestrial). The disease he sends as punishment for sin or neglect to worship him is the dropsy. They hate and punish falsehood; they also set free from sin and are merciful. They are frequently invoked to send rain. Varuṇa has many anthropomorphic features. The pair are fair and beautiful; the sun is their eye, its rays their arms; in the highest heaven is their lofty golden abode with a thousand pillars and a thousand doors. With Mitra or alone Varuṇa is often styled a king (svarâj and samrâj). Therefore the rājasūya is a Varuṇa rite.

"*From Varuṇa's fetter..*" (p. 125)—Either the bond by which a girl is bound to her father till marriage or the girdle with which the bride is girdled after being bathed, combed and dressed for the marriage ceremony.

CHAPTER XVIII

The seventeen kinds of waters (p. 130)—*e.g.*, the waters of the Sarasvatī, water from the Indus, waters taken up by a person facing upstream, and then facing downstream, water in a tank, rain water in the heat of the sun, waters which reflect forms, stagnant waters, waters of milk, curds, ghee. honey and so forth.

"*This is your King, O Bharatas....*" (p. 131)—*Ṛgv.*, IX, 4, 3, 16: another possible though unlikely translation is that of K. P. Jayaswal "Hindu Polity," *viz.*, "This man, O ye people, is your king, he is Soma, King of us Brahmans."

The Ṛṣi Bhṛgu (p. 131)—a sage of almost entirely mythical character in the *Ṛgveda* and later. He counts as a son of Varuṇa bearing the patronymic Vāruṇi. *V.I.*, II, 109.

"*Kicked away is Namuci's head*" (p. 134)—Namuci was a Dâsa; Indra made a compact with him not to slay him by any weapon, by wet or dry, by day or night, and so, when he did slay him, it was with a thunderbolt of foam at the twilight on the margin of the sea. The head, thus struck off, follows Indra reproaching him with treachery. In the *Ṛgveda* Indra twists off the head of Namuci which suggests the natural phenomenon of a waterspout amidst a storm. *Ṛgv.*, V, 30, 7, 8; VI, 20, 6; VIII, 14, 13; *K.R.P.V.*, 131. For the legend of the slaying of Namuci the Asura by Indra *vide Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XII, 7, 3.

The four main classes of the King's people (p. 137)—*i.e.*, brâhmaṇa, kṣatriya or râjanya, vaiṣya and śūdra. *Ṛgv.*, X, 90, 12. There are traces in the *Ṛgveda* of a three-fold division of the people brahma, kṣatram, viśaḥ, VIII, 35, 16-18, and of a four-fold division adding the fourth class of Dāsas, I, 113, 6.

The following passages are from the *Vedic Index*:

"The caste system is one that has progressively developed; it is not legitimate to see in the *Ṛgveda* the full caste system even of the Yajurveda but at the same time it is difficult to doubt that the system was already well on its way to general acceptance." II, 250.

"The Vedic characteristics of caste are heredity, pursuit of a common occupation and restriction on intermarriage." II, 258.

"It may therefore be held that the priests and the nobles practised hereditary occupations and that either class was a closed body into which a man must be born. These two varṇas may thus be fairly regarded as castes. ....But it is not legitimate to regard Vaiśya as a theoretic caste; rather it is an old caste which is in process of

dividing into innumerable sub-castes under influences of occupation, religion or geographical situation." II, 264.

In Vedic times the Vaiśyas, then, were the ordinary freemen of the tribe and their class or caste was not subdivided as in later times.

"It is reasonable to suppose that Śūdra was the name given by the Vedic Indians to the nations opposing them and that these ranked as slaves beside the nobles, priests and people....in later times, however, many aboriginal tribes and princes must have come into the Āryan community, by peaceful means or by conquest, without loss of personal liberty and the term Śūdra would cover many sorts of people who were not really slaves but freemen of humble character." II, 265.

"If there had been no varṇa, caste might never have arisen ; both colour and class occupation are needed for a plausible account of the rise of caste." II, 270.

The views quoted from the *Vedic Index* regarding the priests and the nobles are not acceptable to many scholars. Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his illuminating thesis *Corporate Life in Ancient India* (second edition 1922, Poona) makes the following points :—

(i) The caste system was unknown in the Ṛgvedic period : the class distinctions then were different from distinctions of caste ; there is no evidence to show that any of the four classes in that period formed a professional group or social unit : there is nothing to show that the priestly profession was the monopoly of a particular and definite class of people or that those who adopted it formed any organized social group or groups by themselves : moreover the Śūdras or Dāsas, though no doubt ethnically distinct from the Āryans, yet were composed of various aboriginal races.

(ii) In the later Vedic Age we find the rights and duties of

a Brâhmaṇ clearly formulated showing that the Brâhmaṇs already possessed a corporate character, which they consciously tried to make more and more perfect. The basis of this corporation, however, was not birth but knowledge obtained by an apprenticeship which gave the second and proper 'birth'. *Vide Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II, 6, 2, 10 ; *Taittirīya-Saṁhita*, 6, 6, 1, 4.

From the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 19, we find that there was no inherent distinction between Kshattra and Brâhmaṇ and the one might have been changed into the other by a change in the mode of life and profession : *vide* also *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 231 ; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, III, 2, 1, 39 and XIII, 4, 1, 3 ; *Kātyāyana Śrauta-sūtra*, VI, 4, 12. Besides, a Brâhmaṇ was not restricted to priestly functions ; he could be a warrior and follow other professions ; certain restrictions came later.

The corporations or "guilds" of priests were not rigid, they were not socially exclusive. The Brâhmaṇs freely married among all classes of people and took wives even from the Śūdra class--though this practice was looked upon with disfavour. Penances for the breach of customary duties were often slight : continued neglect, no doubt, led to expulsion but re-admission was not difficult.

What has just been said about the Brâhmaṇ class may, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the Kshatriyas.

The doctrine that birth alone makes a man a Brâhmaṇ is one of slow growth : there is no trace of it in the *Vedas* and *Brāhmaṇas*. For the further development of the caste system, particularly as evidenced by Buddhist and Jain literature, I must refer the reader to the remaining parts of chapter V in Dr. Majumdar's book. He dismisses the "mixed caste" theory as an absurd and artificial attempt to bolster up the original Brahmanical theory that society was divided from the start into four castes. He points out that two potent outside influences

upon the development of caste were religious propaganda and political authority.

On this interesting subject see also a booklet (1931) *Indian Caste System—A Study*, by C. Hayavadana Rao, B.A., B.L., published by The Bangalore Press ; also Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda's *Survival of the Prehistoric Civilization of the Indus Valley.*

Śunaḥśepa (*Dog's tail*) (p. 138)—The *Ṛgveda* states that he was delivered from danger of death by divine aid. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* VII, 13-18 tells the story of how he was purchased as a victim by Rohita, King Hariścandra's son, who had been promised by his father to Varuṇa as a sacrifice. Viśvāmitra was the hotṛ priest and inspired the victim to ask the gods to release him. Vasiṣṭha was the Brahman priest. Viśvāmitra adopted Śunaḥśepa and called him Devarāta (god-given). The *Vedic Index,* II, 219, note, says it is very doubtful whether the narration of this story points to human sacrifice having once formed part of the ritual. *Cp., J.R.A.S.*, 1907, 844, 845.

CHAPTER XIX

His famous father Divodāsa Pijavana (p. 139)—Divodāsa may have been the grandfather and Pijavana the father of Sudās who in *Ṛgv.*, VII, 18, 23, 25 is called Paijavana.

"*Viśvāmitra an ardent devotee of the Lord of the Sky*" (p.139)—Vasiṣṭha was very emphatic because he was himself once accused of worshipping false gods (anṛtadevaḥ), of approaching the gods in vain and was even suspected of being a Yātudhāna 'demon' *Ṛgv.*, VII, 104, 14, 15.

Viśvāmitra's hymn to the rivers (p. 140)—*Ṛgv.*, III, 33. The rivers, thus made fordable by the great ṛṣi's spell, were the Śutudrī (Sutlej) and the Vipāś (Beās) both flowing into the Indus.

Other rivers mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* are the Vitastā (Jhelum), the Asiknī (Chenāb), the Paruṣṇī (Ravi), the

Sarasvatī (Sarsūti), a river midway between the Sutlej and the Jumna, the Sindhu (Indus), the Kubhā (Kābul), the Suvāstu (Swāt), the Krumu (Kurram) and the Gomatī (Gumal).

Great changes both in size and in course have taken place in some of the Punjab rivers since Vedic times. The Sarasvatī was probably much bigger then and flowed into the Indus instead of losing itself in the desert sand.

The Tṛtsus, the royal clan of the Bharata tribe (p. 140)—Much discussion has taken place about the relationship of Tṛtsus and Bharatas. There are three views: (i) that they were foes, (ii) that the Tṛtsus were Vasiṣṭha and his family, priests of the Bharatas, (iii) the view here adopted based on the *Cambridge History of India* and the *Vedic Index*. Later on the Tṛtsus and their subjects the Bharatas coalesced with the Pūrus and other tribes to form the Kuru people.

CHAPTER XX

The Dāśarajña (p. 149)—The battle as here described is fiction: all we learn from the *Ṛgv.*, VII, 18, is that Sudās defeated the ten kings on the Paruṣṇī, a victory made decisive by the sudden rise of the river drowning the fugitives. "It is impossible to decide precisely what part the river played in the battle." *V.I.*, I, 499, note.

The different views are that enemies of Sudās tried to divert the stream but failed and were drowned in its current or that Sudās was caught between two opposing armies and had to escape over the Paruṣṇī which his enemies in vain tried to divert in order to make him more accessible to their attack and were consequently drowned or that there was no such diverting of the river at all.

Vasiṣṭha's hymn of victory (p. 150)—*Ṛgv.*, VII, 18, *vide* also VII, 33, and 83. In my version I have used the translation of this hymn by Hopkins, *J.A.O.S.*, XV, 258,

which see for a very ingenious interpretation of this difficult hymn.

The ascription to Vasiṣṭha of the last stanza concluding the story is a polite fiction.

Sudās' sacrifice after his victory (p. 151)—traditionally a Horse Sacrifice (Aśvamedha) *Ṛgv.*, III, 53, the sacrifice at which, some say, the great quarrel between Viśvāmitra and the Vasiṣṭhas came to a head by Viśvāmitra's being rendered unconscious and speechless by a spell until the Jamadagnis rescued him and enabled him to utter, amongst others, four imprecatory stanzas (21-24) against the Vasiṣṭhas who will neither repeat them nor listen to them. *Vide Bṛhaddevatā,* IV, 112-120.

It is doubtful whether sacrifices were really offered as thankofferings for favours received: traces of such thankoffering are scanty; the idea does not seem to have taken root. The aśvamedha offered after victory was really intended to strengthen and secure the success arrived at; the welfare of the king and his people and the birth of a prince were prayed for at its conclusion.

The Vedic Sacrifice (p. 151)—*Vide K.R.P.V.*, 257-278. Professor Keith makes the following points:—The fundamental idea in the *Ṛgveda* is that the sacrifice is a gift offering to attract the god's attention and goodwill and so to earn rewards. "The god hath accepted the offering; he hath become strengthened; he hath won greater might. May I prosper in accordance with the prospering of the god."

The belief in the magic potency of the sacrifice in compelling the gods to do what was required is fully developed in the *Brāhmaṇas* but is only beginning to manifest itself in the *Ṛgveda* whereas the belief in the greatness of the sacrifice was steadily developing. *Ṛgv.*, I, 83, 3, 4, 5; X, 90, 6, 9 and X, 98.

In the case noted already of Vasiṣṭha enticing away

Indra from Pāśadyumna's sacrifice it is evidently assumed that the god was free to go where he chose.

It would, however, be a complete error to assume that the magic side of the sacrifice is the primitive one and that the whole sacrifice is really a magic performance. The Vedic sacrifices known to us have many elements of magic but the *Brāhmaṇas* enable us to see clearly that the priests were determined to find in them a magical effect.

Sin could be removed by sacrifice and magic. The sin offering is only in essence a special form of the gift offering. Nor is there any doubt that simple sacrifices to avert the anger of the god, usually Varuṇa, were common. The element of magic for the expulsion of sins and evil is found in the Varuṇapraghāsas, the second of the four-month offerings, in the Soma sacrifice and in the Sautrāmaṇī offering. But, on the other hand, the intervention of the gods, invoked to remove evil, is constantly mentioned.

The sacrifice as communion and sacrament. Though in the Vedic ritual there is clear evidence that the priests and the sacrificer, if qualified to do so by being a brahman, eat portions of the offering after the god had partaken of it and though in some cases the offering if not eaten was touched or smelt, yet the sacrifice as a communion with the deity whether by eating with him, or as a sacrament through eating a victim, impregnated in some degree with the deity, is not recognized as such in the formulæ of the ritual; there is nothing of the view that the worshippers are eating together with the god in order to renew their relationship. The gods, of course, are invited to be present and in the invocations of Indra, the Maruts and the Aśvins, *Ṛgv.*, III, 52, 2; IV, 17, 16; V, 30, 1; VI, 29, 3; VIII, 100; X, 48, 49, 124; V, 53; 1, 118, 119, there are suggestions indicating that the priest believed that the gods would, if duly praised, reveal themselves to his longing vision.

Another theory of sacrifice is that the sacrificer desires to enter into relationship with the powers above, the source of life, and, because immediate contact would be fatal, an intermediary is interposed who at the same time serves as a substitute for the sacrificer himself. Keith thinks the authors of this theory have allowed themselves to be influenced unduly by the theories of the *Brāhmaṇas* and have under-estimated the purely speculative and learned character of these suggestions. He holds that the view of sacrifice as a gift offering seems to be borne out by every probability and by the undoubted fact that the sacrifice was normally so understood throughout antiquity.

For the sacrificial and theological ideas pervading the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa vide* Haug's introduction to his translation of that work published by Trübner & Co., London, 1863.

Maghavan '*generous giver*' (p. 152)—The Vedic deities are usually kind and generous to their votaries. The exception is Rudra who is emphatically a terrible god. Indra as a warrior god may show occasional signs of hot temper but, though accused in one hymn of changeableness (*Ṛgv.*, VI, 47, 15-17), in the main he is good and true and generous to his worshippers. No great stress is laid on the moral quality of the gods in the *Ṛgveda* ; the moral aspect is practically confined to Varuṇa, the Ādityas and to Aditi. The relation between gods and men is one of friendship except in the case of Rudra who has to be satiated with offering to avert his dangerous presence.

It has hitherto been supposed that from the old Vedic god Rudra the Hindu god Śiva has evolved. But Sir John Marshall (*Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, 1931) speaking of the basic features of Hinduism such as the cults of Śiva and the Mother Goddess, the worship of animals, trees and stones, phallism and yoga, says that it is far more probable that such features do not

represent a popular form of religion evolved by the Indo-Āryans themselves—a parallel growth, as it were to the Vedic religion—but derive from the pre-Āryans. He claims that the discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro prove the pre-Āryans *circa* 3000 B.C. to have possessed a civilization as advanced as that in Mesopotamia or in Egypt and make it highly probable that some of the leading features in the living Hinduism of the Indo-Āryans of to-day are traceable to the pre-Āryan peoples of the Indus Valley, *i.e.*, the non-Āryan peoples who preceded the Indo-Āryans in the Punjab. If so, it becomes easier to understand how Viṣṇu and Śiva, figures of but secondary rank in the Vedic hymns, have gained precedence in Hinduism over Indra, Varuṇa, Agni and the other old Vedic deities ; and, incidentally also, how temples, images and temple priesthoods became so important in religious worship. These pre-Āryans, who were not so inferior physically, mentally and religiously to the Āryans as the Vedic hymns seem to take for granted, must have imposed their religion upon the Āryan invaders and immigrants.

The orthodox view that Sir John Marshall is combating admits that a few features were taken from the pre-Āryans but it does not credit the pre-Āryans with much culture : on the contrary, it looks upon them as little more than untutored savages. "No doubt," he writes, "the non-Āryan jungle tribes of to-day preserve for us some of the cruder and more elemental features of the pre-Āryan religion. But to assume that such features represent the sum total of that religion is as irrational as to suppose that the rude grass and mud hovels of these same jungle tribes are representative of the massive edifices of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa."

2144·32 Printed at The Bangalore Press, Bangalore City
by T. Subramania Aiyar, Superintendent.

ERRATA

Page 17, *line* 6, *delete* "and bounded forward"
,, 21, ,, 6, *for* "a she" *read* "as he"
,, 46, ,, 1, *for* "he" *read* "the"
,, 85, ,, 9, *delete* comma *after* "discovered for"
,, 120, ,, 11, *for* "over Indra." *read* "over Indra?"
,, ,, ,, 5, (from bottom) *for* "unwed." *read* "unwed?"
,, 121, ,, 10, *for* "years'" *read* "seasons'"